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Psychologists can also use social media to inform the public about psychological and professional issues. 'Smart' always-connected devices now allow the immediate internet publication of information and material in a way that previously was restricted to publishing houses. Such immediacy requires psychologists to think carefully about their social media use, together with that of their clients.

In using social media, psychologists need to ensure professionalism and prudent judgement that maintains respect for the profession. Social media can present challenges that should be familiar to psychologists trained to uphold our ethical codes of respect, propriety and integrity. Professional boundaries need to be maintained online – such as keeping separate personal and professional accounts, profiles, and email addresses.

It is important to ensure you have adequate knowledge of the platforms and programs being used so that the information you post is under your control and is secure. It is a good idea to have rights to delete, modify or block information from your sites if possible. The use of privacy settings is important, but even private accounts can be exposed to others as social media users may have limited control over their privacy. Note also that privacy policies frequently change. Furthermore, posts online tend to be there permanently and are almost impossible to delete.

New research shows the extent to which clients now search for information about their therapists online, and vice versa – a hot ethical issue. Practitioners have been disciplined for blogging about their therapy sessions, posting inappropriate photos, or revealing compromising information about their personal relationships or lifestyle.

Social media use is frequently cited as a contributor to relationship breakdown across many walks of life. Remember that information can easily be misconstrued. Confidentiality can be a challenge – for example, using email accounts that are social media connected risks sharing confidential contacts with others and all communications are automatically content-analysed for advertising and other purposes.

Complaints to regulatory bodies by consumers often include text messages and email exchanges from their psychologist. Social media posts, pictures and recordings may also be used in some cases to substantiate a case for disciplinary action. Smart technology can allow people to record – or even live-stream therapy sessions instantly online – without therapists being aware.

A social media policy is highly recommended – incorporating a written agreement with clients about digital communication. It could cover issues such as how email or text communication may be used, including:

- the purpose and frequency, response time expectations
- ensuring confidentiality and privacy including not 'forwarding on' messages or sending to insecure phones or accounts

From the Chair

Social media and psychology practice in an online world

Social media can be a good way to keep in touch with the profession and developments within the field. Many psychology organisations regularly post up-to-date quality information on new research, policy and practice. Most people now search for psychological and other medical information online, in order to assist their choices.



- agreements about not recording or capturing sessions
- agreements about how to manage social media including not sending 'friend' requests or connecting
- agreeing not to allow testimonials or online reviews, and
- mutual expectations about online behaviours.

Social media both extends the opportunities for communication and can increase challenging ethical issues that need careful thought and planning.

Professor Brin Grenyer

Chair, Psychology Board of Australia

Reviewing the psychology education and training model – progress update

Over the past year, representatives from the Australian Psychological Society, Australian Psychology Accreditation Council, Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association and the Psychology Board of Australia (the Collaborative Working Party) have been working together to review the psychology education and training model.

The starting point for the review was the national psychology education forum held late last year in Canberra. This forum brought together leaders across government, education, workforce, regulation and the profession.

A summary of outcomes can be viewed in the 18 December PsyBA Communiqué www.psychologyboard.gov.au/News/Communiqués.aspx.

In recent months, the Collaborative Working Party has been refining the options for reform. We agree that psychology education and training pathways should:

1. be consistent with international benchmarks
2. meet current and projected workforce demand
3. provide improved access to additional qualifications (such as area of practice endorsement), and
4. be sufficiently resourced.

In response to feedback from participants at the National Forum we are carrying out further work in a number of areas:

5. the implications for the workforce and access to services
6. opportunities to improve internships and other supervised practice and placement programs
7. exploring education and funding models, and
8. enhancing the education and training pathway for area of practice endorsement.

Once this work has been completed there will be further engagement activities to 'road test' the feasibility of the options for reform.

Further details about this initiative can be found on the Board's website: www.psychologyboard.gov.au

Continuing professional development

The Board's revised registration standard for continuing professional development (CPD) and revised CPD guidelines came into effect on 1 December 2015. The new standard and guidelines apply to the current registration year (1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016).

Psychologists renewing their registration by 30 November 2016 will need to declare that they have met the requirements of the new standard.

The core CPD requirements for psychologists have not changed, so most of you will not need to do anything differently to meet the Board's requirements.

The core requirements are:

- have a written learning plan
- complete 10 hours of peer consultation or supervision per year
- complete 20 hours of other CPD activities related to goals in your learning plan, and
- reflect on learning and record some written reflection in your journal.

Please review the revised standard and guidelines to ensure you have a good understanding of your obligations as a registered psychologist and to check if any changes will affect you.

Further information including copies of the standard and guidelines, FAQ and other information is available on the [CPD resources](#) web page.

Recency of practice

The Board's revised registration standard for recency of practice and revised policy for recency of practice requirements will come into effect on 1 December 2016, replacing the current versions.

The revised standard will introduce a new minimum psychology practice requirement of 250 hours within five years.

All individuals applying for general registration from 1 December 2016 must have practised for at least 250 hours as a registered psychologist or provisional psychologist within the previous five years on the date they apply. This includes current registrants with provisional or non-practising registration who are applying to change to general registration.

All psychologists applying for renewal of general registration after 1 December 2016 must have practised for at least 250 hours as a registered psychologist or provisional psychologist within the previous five years on the date they apply to renew. For most psychologists this will be when renewing before 30 November in 2017. However, if you renew during the late period in 2016 (1-31 December 2016) you will need to declare that you meet the new standard that starts on 1 December 2016.

Most psychologists will not be affected by the change; it will only affect those who have been practising very infrequently.

If you cannot meet the minimum hours of practice in the revised standard, this will not necessarily prevent you from returning to practice as a psychologist. However, you would usually need to take remedial action to update your psychology skills and knowledge.

Options for remedial action are set out in the registration standard with further detail and guidance provided in the policy for recency of practice requirements. The revised policy introduces new tailored re-entry programs for applicants requiring supervised practice to update their skills and knowledge. This replaces the current requirement for re-entry programs to be completed under the 4+2 internship program. This means there is both increased responsibility and increased flexibility for people returning to practice after a long break. They will be required to identify their own learning needs and, in consultation with a supervisor, design a program tailored to address skills and knowledge gaps for their intended scope of practice.

Please review the revised standard to ensure you have a good understanding of your obligations as a registered psychologist and to check if any changes will affect you.

Further information including copies of the revised standard and guidelines, forms to support the new re-entry programs, FAQ and other information is available on the [ROP resources](#) web page.

Public consultation on a guideline for the transitional program

The National Board is seeking input from the profession, employers and the community on a proposal for a new guideline for transitional programs for overseas-qualified applicants for registration.

The proposed guideline would not introduce any new requirements – its purpose would be to provide extra guidance on the requirements for overseas applicants that are included in the [registration standard for general registration](#).

The consultation paper is published on the website under [current consultations](#) and is open for feedback until 7 September 2016.

Approved programs of study – new online searchable database

Practitioners, the public and education providers can now conduct an online search of psychology approved programs of study through the searchable database. This is accessible through the AHPRA website www.ahpra.gov.au/Education/Approved-Programs-of-Study. The list, a product of the partnership between AHPRA and the Psychology Board:

- provides information about individual programs of study such as course length, approval dates and conditions
- allows education providers to check, in real time, any changes or updates to the approved programs of study, and
- allows potential students to search for courses to ensure that they will lead to registration with the Board.

The searchable list replaces the previously published static list for psychology and will make it easier and quicker to find important information about approved programs of study.

The searchable list includes identified inactive programs of study. These are programs that are no longer approved by a Board but which still entitle graduates to apply for registration for a period of five years from the date the course was no longer approved.

The Board meets monthly to make decisions about programs of study. These decisions are added to the searchable lists and will be publicly available as they occur.

Appointments to the Overseas Qualified Psychologists Assessment Advisory Committee

The Board has recently established the Overseas Qualified Psychologists Assessment Advisory Committee (advisory committee) to assist the Board in assessing the knowledge and clinical skills of overseas-qualified psychologists.

The Board has appointed the following five members to the advisory committee for 12 months:

- Professor Brin Grenyer (committee chair)
- Professor Alison Garton
- Professor Gina Geffen
- Professor Stephen Touyz, and
- Associate Professor Graham Tyson.

The appointments are made by the Board under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The role of the advisory committee will be to provide expert input, as required by the Board and AHPRA, on matters related to the assessment of overseas-qualified psychologists and their qualifications within the Board's approved model of assessment.

Advisory committee members are senior members of the psychology profession who have experience in and knowledge about the core competencies required for registration in the profession, including experience in the assessment of overseas-qualified psychologists and expertise in psychology course accreditation and delivery of psychology programs in Australia.

The advisory committee will meet regularly throughout the year with the first meeting held 6 June 2016.

Maintaining your Board-approved supervisor status

Board-approved supervisors have a responsibility to maintain and develop their skills as a supervisor on an ongoing basis.

Board-approved supervisors of provisional psychologists and registrars are required to complete an approved supervisor training program at least every five years in order to maintain Board approval. All supervisors will be required to complete an approved training program and apply to extend their approval before their supervisor approval expiry date.

How do I apply to maintain my supervisor status?

Supervisors are required to provide evidence of completion of Board-approved supervision training, as follows:

- evidence of completion of one Board-approved master class within five years of the date the last training course was completed (for those who gained Board approval after 1 July 2013), or
- evidence of completion of one Board-approved master class by 30 June 2018 for those holding Board approval on 1 July 2013.

Please apply using this form: [Application to maintain Board-approved supervisor status - MBAS-76](#). The MBAS-76 is available on the [Forms](#) page of the website. There is no fee for this application.

How do I know when my approval expiry date is?

Your supervisor approval expiry date is five years from the date you last completed an approved supervisor training program.

If you transitioned to the National Scheme as an approved supervisor in 2010 and you have not completed a supervisor training program and provided the certificate of completion to AHPRA, your expiry date is 30 June 2018.

To check when your approval is due, log in to the [AHPRA online services portal](#). Click on *Supervisor services* and then *Supervision information*. Your user name and password are the same ones you use when renewing your registration in November each year.

If the expiry date of my approval is 30 June 2018, what should I do?

You have just over two years to complete a Board-approved supervisor training program. The minimum requirement is completion of a one-day master class. For more information on the minimum requirement to maintain Board-approved supervisor status please see the [Supervisor FAQ](#).

Board-approved supervisor training providers are listed on the [Board's website](#) along with the links to the provider's websites that indicate the workshop topics and training dates. You are encouraged to review the available training options and choose the one most appropriate to your needs and CPD learning plan.

There are a large number of supervisors whose expiry date is 30 June 2018. The Board encourages supervisors to enrol in the master class training early and not wait until the deadline is approaching to enrol in the training. This will ensure that you have the widest choice in the provider, the timing and the topic of the master class.

What do I do when I have completed the refresher training?

When you have completed your refresher training you should notify AHPRA by applying to maintain your approval for another five years. The application to maintain Board-approved supervisor status (MBAS-76) is available on the [Forms](#) page of the website. There is no fee for this application. Once the application is approved your Board-approved supervisor expiry date will be extended for another five years from the date you completed your training program.

Please note that the training provider does not notify AHPRA for you – they provide information about how many psychologists have completed training for annual and outcome reports, but not your individual details or certificate of completion. **You must notify AHPRA yourself, using the MBAS-76.**

What about area of practice endorsement for higher degree supervisors?

All applications to become a Board-approved supervisor that are made after 1 July 2013 must meet the new supervisor training requirements as outlined in the [Guidelines for supervisions and supervisor training providers](#). These guidelines require that psychologists who are applying to be a higher degree supervisor to have held endorsement in the relevant approved area of practice for at least two years. For example, if you wish to supervise a psychologist in a Master of Health Psychology program, you must have held an area of practice endorsement in health psychology for two years before obtaining Board approval as a supervisor in this program.

However, psychologists who were approved by the Board as a higher degree supervisor before 1 July 2013 do not need to meet these new requirements until they apply to maintain their approval for another five years – no later than 1 July 2018.

In the meantime these supervisors can continue to supervise students in any area of practice under the Board's transition provisions – provided they have relevant knowledge and experience to provide suitable supervision.

If these higher degree supervisors wish to continue their Board-approved higher degree supervisor status after 1 July 2018 they will need to have been granted an endorsement by **30 June 2016** so that they will meet the two-year requirement by 2018.

If you are seeking higher degree supervisors who are approved for any area of practice you can find them using [Search for a Supervisor](#). Under *Search by pathway and location* select *Higher degree program* but don't select an area of practice, then specify the suburb, postcode and surrounding area to bring up a list of supervisors with approval for any area of practice.

The Board encourages those psychologists who fall into this transition provision to ensure they have completed the registrar program and been granted endorsement by the deadline.

An area of practice endorsement is not required for higher degree supervisors providing supervision to provisional psychologists in the 5+1 pathway, as the 5+1 programs do not provide training in specialised areas of practice and the pathway does not lead to an area of practice endorsement.

More information:

More information about supervisor training requirements is available on the Board's website under [Requirements for supervisors](#) and on the [Supervisor training](#) webpage, which includes links to approved training providers' websites.

To add or remove a supervisor category or make any changes to your supervisor information please contact AHPRA using the [web enquiry form](#).

Report on supervisor training

The Board's approved supervisor training program has now been in place for over two years. A review and analysis of the supervisor training program has recently been conducted.

Overall, the review indicates that the supervisor training program has been working well. The program is of a high quality and standard, and meets the requirement to train supervisors in the public interest.

Psychologists are both updating their supervisor training to maintain board-approved supervisor status, and training in supervision to become a supervisor for the first time. Sufficient numbers of training workshops are being offered across the country for the current training needs and these workshops have been well received and highly rated by participants.

The number and location of workshops planned for 2016 is higher than the number delivered in 2015, indicating that the supervisor training program is continuing to grow. As a whole, the supervisor training providers seem to be bedding down their processes and moving from new programs to a 'business as usual' model.

Background

The Board held an expression of interest (EOI) process for suitably qualified and experienced individuals and organisations to deliver supervisor training programs across Australia in 2013. Twelve providers were approved. Board-approved supervisor training providers must continue to meet several requirements throughout the five-year approval period in order to maintain approved training provider status.

Each year, training providers submit an annual report to the Board. This report is about the performance of

Board-approved supervisor training providers, and of the supervisor training program, and is for the reporting period from 1 January 2015 to 1 December 2015.

Number of supervisor training providers

There are currently 11 Board-approved supervisor training providers. The details for each provider are listed on the Board's website. The number of approved providers has remained stable, with only one provider electing to withdraw since 2013.

Number of workshops

As part of the application to become a Board-approved supervisor for the first time, psychologists must complete full training. This consists of three components: component one (Full 1) is knowledge/preparatory reading (completed online); component two (Full 2) is a two-day skills training workshop; and component three (Full 3) is competency-based assessment and evaluation. Master class (MC) training is a one-day knowledge and skills workshop undertaken to maintain Board-approved supervisor status.

In 2015, 90 workshops were delivered, comprising 48 full training (component two: skills) workshops, and 42 master classes. This was an increase from 2014, when 72 workshops were delivered (41 Full 2; 31 MC).

Supervisor training providers have indicated that 131 workshops are planned for 2017 (60 Full 2; 71 MC).

Location of workshops

Seventy-four workshops were delivered in metropolitan areas (41 skills training and 33 master classes), and 16 workshops were delivered in regional areas (seven skills training and nine master classes). In comparison, only five workshops were delivered in regional areas during 2014.

While there was an increase in the delivery of regional workshops in 2015 due to the Board's push for regional coverage, there remains a minimal delivery of workshops in some regional areas.

A number of providers noted that workshops were cancelled or postponed due to low enrolment numbers, particularly those workshops scheduled for regional locations.

The Board encourages training providers to deliver workshops in regional as well as metropolitan locations.

In addition, we encourage groups of psychologists in regional locations who are interested in supervisor training to contact training providers directly to organise a workshop in their area.

Number of participants

Overall, a large number of participants completed supervisor training. There were significantly more participants completing training in 2015 than during 2014.

For the full training, 780 participants passed component one, 684 completed component two, and 645 people completed component three. (During 2014, 587 participants passed component one, 594 completed component two, and a lesser number of 193 completed component three.)

A total of 692 participants passed master class training in 2015 (only 376 in 2014).

Most workshops had 7-22 participants, and all workshops were evaluated by participants as good to excellent. Participant feedback highlighted satisfaction with the content of the training, trainer expertise, the reflective nature of the training, the significant learning gained through group role plays and exercises and the positive outcome of collegial interaction and support.

Continuous improvement process for 2016-17

The Board has previously agreed to a continuous improvement process for the supervisor training program to ensure that the program is working well, and is fit for purpose. The main areas of the supervisor program that will be monitored this year include:

- the lower numbers of workshops in regional locations
- the number of master class workshops needed to ensure sufficient supply of workshops for the demand for refresher training for the 2018 cohort of Board-approved supervisors.
- progression of the scheduled review of supervisor policies that directly affect the supervisor training program including the *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers*, the *Policy on refusing or revoking Board-approved supervisor status*, and the *Policy on the revocation of Board-approved supervisor training status*.

The Board will provide updates on these three areas as appropriate.

Recent court and tribunal cases

Unregistered psychologist convicted and fined by court

A South Australian man has received a \$7,500 fine and a criminal conviction for knowingly and recklessly using the title 'psychologist' in breach of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Mr Pierre Allauch's registration as a psychologist lapsed in 2011 and he has not been registered since that time.

In January 2016, Mr Allauch was charged with one count of contravening section 113 of the National Law. Specifically, Mr Allauch was found to have used the title 'psychologist' between 21 January 2014 and 28 February 2014.

At a hearing in the Adelaide Magistrates Court on 9 June 2016, Magistrate Foley recorded a conviction and fined Mr Allauch \$7,500, plus legal and court costs.

The current registration status of all psychologists is published on the [register of practitioners](#). If a person's name does not appear on the register, they are not registered to practise in a regulated health profession in Australia.

You can read more in the [media release - Unregistered psychologist convicted and fined by court - 14 June 2016](#).

Tribunal reprimands psychologist for failure to maintain professional boundaries

Ms Vivian Jarrett has been reprimanded by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (the tribunal) for failing to maintain professional boundaries when treating a patient.

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) referred Ms Jarrett to the tribunal alleging she had failed to establish and maintain a consistent and appropriate therapeutic frame, maintain professional boundaries and adequate records.

The allegations made by the Board related to Ms Jarrett's treatment of a patient between 10 June 2008 and 8 January 2009.

The psychologist admitted to the allegation of poor record keeping, which constituted unsatisfactory professional conduct, but did not admit to the other allegations.

The tribunal found Ms Jarrett had failed to maintain professional boundaries and reprimanded her.

You can read more in the [media release - Tribunal reprimands psychologist for failure to maintain professional boundaries](#).

National Scheme news

Community Reference Group advises the National Scheme

AHPRA and the National Boards have a commitment to work with the community, and this has continued to grow over the past three years with the increasing involvement and contribution of our Community Reference Group (CRG).

Established in June 2013, the CRG meets quarterly and has a number of roles, including providing feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge in the community about health practitioner regulation.

We recently welcomed [six new members](#) to the CRG and we're looking forward to their contribution to the work of the National Scheme.

The CRG also has a new Chair, Mark Bodycoat, who has an extensive background in regulation and consumer affairs. As Mark says, 'The main objective of professional regulation in schemes like the National Scheme is maintaining public safety. To do this properly, regulatory schemes must be relevant, responsive and effective.'

Mark believes that community groups help to focus on issues of importance as they affect the wider community, and their input helps to ensure that regulatory schemes are focused on the right concerns. A body like the CRG provides a consistent channel by which issues of significance to the community can be heard and addressed.

To read more about Mark and the CRG, see the Winter issue of the [AHPRA newsletter](#).

Further information is available on the [Community Reference Group](#) webpage.

Choosing Wisely Australia campaign: five questions to ask your healthcare provider

AHPRA and the National Boards are promoting a new public awareness campaign. In March, the Choosing Wisely Australia campaign released 61 recommendations centred on the theme 'five things clinicians and consumers should question'.

The recommendations aim to help consumers start a conversation with their healthcare professional about the kind of healthcare they are receiving, including whether imaging and screening is necessary, when to use antibiotics and how to start a conversation on how to improve end of life and palliative care.

The campaign is part of a global Choosing Wisely healthcare initiative and the recommendations are the collective advice of 14 Australian colleges, societies and associations.

The [Choosing Wisely Australia website](#) provides a number of useful tools that you might want to share with your colleagues, friends and family including a fact sheet titled '5 questions to ask your doctor or healthcare provider', which has been translated into 10 languages.

AHPRA has posted links to the Choosing Wisely campaign on Facebook and Twitter.

Reporting of health practitioners by their treating practitioner under Australia's national mandatory reporting law

Melbourne researcher Marie Bismark and her colleagues have recently published an analysis of reports about health (medical) practitioners made by their treating practitioners under Australia's new mandatory reporting system. The results challenge some frequently expressed assumptions.

They used retrospective case-file review and analysis of treating practitioner reports received by AHPRA between 1 November 2011 and 31 January 2013, and of the outcomes of the completed investigations of these reports to November 2014.

Their main outcome measures were the characteristics of treating practitioners and reported practitioners; nature of the care relationship; grounds for report; and regulatory action taken in response to report.

Of 846 mandatory reports about medical practitioners, 64 (8%) were by treating practitioners. A minority of reports (14 of 64) were made by a practitioner-patient's regular care provider; most (50 of 64) arose from an encounter during an acute admission, first assessment or informal corridor consultation.

The reported practitioner-patients were typically being treated for mental illness (28 of 64) or substance misuse (25 of 64). In 80% of reports (50 of 64), reporters described practitioner-patients who exhibited diminished insight, dishonesty, disregard for patient safety, or an intention to self-harm.

Conclusions

The nature and circumstances of the typical treating practitioner report challenge assumptions expressed in policy debates about the merits of the new mandatory reporting law. Mandatory reports by treating practitioners are rare.

The typical report is about substance misuse or mental illness, is made by a doctor who is not the patient's regular care provider, and identifies an impediment to safely managing the risk posed by the practitioner-patient within the confines of the treating relationship.

The full report is available online: *Reporting of health practitioners by their treating practitioner under Australia's national mandatory reporting law* - Marie M Bismark, Matthew Spittal, Jennifer Morris, David Studdert: [Medical Journal of Australia, January 2016](#).

Call for applications for appointment to a Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee

AHPRA seeks expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced people to be appointed to a Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee (the Expert Committee).

The role of the Expert Committee is to advise the National Boards on policy related to the use of scheduled medicines, including matters relevant to National Boards developing submissions for endorsements for scheduled medicines for consideration by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

Appointments are for up to three years, from late September 2016.

For more information, please see the [call for applications](#) on AHPRA's website.

Applications close **Monday 22 August 2016**.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Prof. Brin Grenyer, Chair, Psychology Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001.

