BAMBA | British Association of Mindfulness-based Approaches

Registered charity 1211302

Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS) & Mentoring | Reflective Teaching Support

A Guide to Peer Supervision

At a Glance

- Peer supervision can support reflection, learning and connection
- It complements, but does not replace, formal supervision
- Formal supervision and the annual mindfulness-based supervision review remain required for BAMBA membership
- Ongoing practice, including retreat and CPD, should be maintained each year

Peer supervision offers a valuable space for shared learning while sitting within a wider framework of professional accountability.

Peer supervision can offer a valuable and enriching reflective space for mindfulness teachers to support one another in their ongoing professional and personal development. When approached with care, clarity, and integrity, it can meaningfully complement formal supervision.

It is important to be clear, however, that peer supervision is not a substitute for formal supervision with a trained and approved supervisor. Rather, it can serve as a supportive addition within a wider framework of professional accountability.

Purpose and Role of Peer Supervision

Peer supervision provides an opportunity for:

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- Shared reflection on teaching experiences
- Mutual learning and perspective-taking
- Ongoing inquiry into good practice
- Sustaining connection and wellbeing among teachers

Mindfulness practice remains central to this work, grounding dialogue in presence, compassion, and curiosity.

Key Principles and Considerations

1. Experience and Training

Peer supervision works best when all participants have:

- An established personal mindfulness practice
- Have trained to teach mindfulness
- Ideally, some training or experience in supervision, mentoring, or facilitation

This helps ensure that reflective spaces are held with appropriate care, skill, and awareness of ethical considerations.

2. Structure and Process

Clear structure supports safety and effectiveness. Peer supervision sessions benefit from agreed processes such as:

- Opening with a shared mindfulness practice
- Clear allocation of time for each participant
- Agreed ways of bringing issues, questions, or reflections
- Clarity about who is holding the process at any given time

Without structure, sessions can easily drift into informal discussion, losing their reflective and professional focus.

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3. Contracting and Boundaries

As with all forms of supervision, peer arrangements should be well contracted. This may include agreements about:

- Frequency and length of sessions
- Membership and group size
- Confidentiality and its limits
- Roles and responsibilities
- How feedback is offered
- How difficulties or ruptures will be addressed
- Review points for reflecting on how the arrangement is working

Clear agreements help create trust, safety, and mutual respect over time. Please see the attached appendix to support contracting arrangements for peer supervision.

4. Role Fluidity and Psychological Safety

In peer supervision, participants may move between roles — at times offering reflection or holding the space, and at other times receiving support themselves.

Navigating these shifts with mindfulness, clarity, and sensitivity is essential. Attending to power dynamics, differences in experience, and individual needs supports psychological safety for all involved.

5. Accountability and Professional Responsibility

While peer supervision is based on mutual support, it does not remove individual responsibility. Each participant remains accountable for:

- Meeting professional standards
- Taking part in an annual supervision review with a BAMBA-registered supervisor prior to membership renewal

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- Ethical decision-making
- Ongoing development as a teacher

Where concerns arise that fall outside the scope of peer support, these should be taken to formal supervision.

Creating a Supportive Culture

Effective peer supervision rests on a shared culture of:

- Openness and honesty
- Kindness and respect
- Willingness to both offer and receive challenge
- Awareness of difference, including identity, background, and lived experience

Explicitly naming shared values and guidelines can help create a reflective space in which learning and growth are supported.

Clarity in Language and Terminology

There are many forms of reflective peer spaces, both one-to-one and in groups. While these can be deeply valuable, it is important to be precise in how they are described.

The term “supervision” carries specific meaning within professional and ethical frameworks. Peer support or peer reflection should not be presented as equivalent to formal supervision. Clear terminology helps protect:

- The integrity of supervision
- Teachers’ access to appropriate levels of support
- Public trust in mindfulness teaching standards

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Peer Supervision as a Supplement to Formal Supervision

a. Peer supervision may supplement formal supervision but only up to a total of 50% of the overall annual supervision completed.
b. Where BAMBA member teachers engage **only** in mindfulness work **focused on holding space for drop in and introductory sessions** and **nothing more** throughout the year, peer based supervision is deemed as meeting BAMBA's professional standards providing at least one supervision session annually (known as the Supervision Annual Review) has been led by a qualified, experienced supervisor that is registered with BAMBA, or has the skills and experience equal to or above BAMBA supervisor training requirements.
c. **Best practice** – where teachers actively and formally take part in peer supervision, BAMBA recommends that from time to time (deemed once or twice a year | twelve-month cycle), the peer group invite a BAMBA registered supervisor to guide and support their session in a professional capacity.

NB: Peer Supervision should not replace supervision with a trained and BAMBA-approved supervisor. Maintaining appropriate accountability, safeguarding, and meeting professional standards remains essential.

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APPENDIX 1

Contracting template for peer supervision

As with all forms of supervision, peer arrangements should be well contracted.

This proforma is aimed at supporting those entering into peer supervision groups to create a sense of shared contracting and agreement that suits both individual and group needs whilst maintaining the integrity of the session.

Name of those attending peer supervision
Date of discussion
1. What is the proposed length of the peer supervision session
2.What is the total number of expected attendees to this peer group
3.Discuss and agree confidentiality, limitations and safety of those attending
4.Discuss the roles of each attendee and if appropriate the responsibilities within the group. For example (but not limited to): • Timekeeper • A nominated person to lead practice • A person responsible for ensuring all attendees are given equal space • Someone who is nominated to administer the session (set up meeting point, send invitations, take notes for circulation as appropriate)
5.Agree feedback loop style, delivery and communication between peers
6.Discuss and agree any required escalation route or supporting person who may be on hand after a supervision event to help with any difficulties or challenges that might arise
7.Agree ongoing review cycle e.g. how discussion, actions and learning outcomes might be captured and used in formal supervision sessions / annual supervision review.

Clear agreements help create trust, safety, and mutual respect over time. Peer group supervision should be documented and used to support your BAMBA annual membership renewal. Please use this appendix as a guide to formalising peer supervision sessions and to help you to create appropriate documentation to support your supervision throughout the year.

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