



# IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN SINGHEALTH POLYCLINICS

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## BACKGROUND

- Social work supervision was formalised in SHP in January 2019 to uphold the standard of Social Work practice in SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) and to reinforce the importance of supervision as a professional and ethical responsibility for all social workers in SHP.
- The 3 functions of social work supervision are to educate, to support and to manage supervisees effectively through this structure.
- Prior to the implementation, on-site supervision was in place to provide to support to newly-joined Medical Social Workers (MSW) and Social Work Assistants (SWA) during the job probation.
- Supervision was needs-driven and supervisees would contact their on-site supervisors, Senior or Head MSW for case discussions whenever they encountered complex issues that required clarification and guidance.

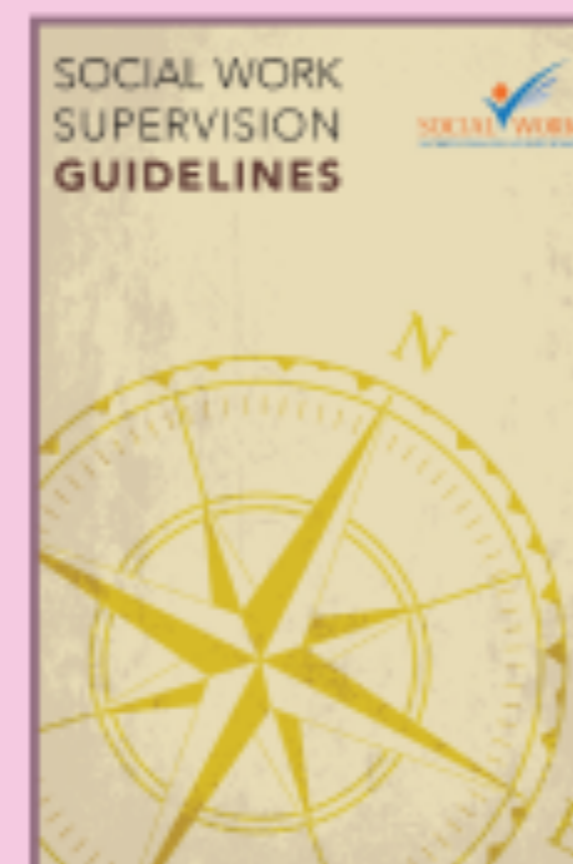
## AIM

To support professional growth and to enhance the development of social worker's professional identity, competence and professionalism. Ultimately, it translates into enhanced well-being of patients.

## METHODOLOGY

The supervision framework in SHP aligns closely and takes reference from the "Social Work Supervision Guidelines" by Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB).

The aims of supervision and the responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisee are agreed upon using the contract of supervision.



Supervision Log (adapted from SWAAB) is used to document the supervision session and is submitted to Head MSW annually.

No.	DATE	Supervisor	Supervisee	Topic	Duration	Location	Notes	Action Plan
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In SHP, SWAs provide support to MSWs in case management as they perform financial assessment through interviews with patients and their families before applying for appropriate financial assistance schemes in SHP. The SWA team is also included in the supervision framework as they play an important role in supporting MSWs in case management. Before the pandemic, the SWA team met every month and focused on reciprocal learning through the sharing of experiences, skills and knowledge.

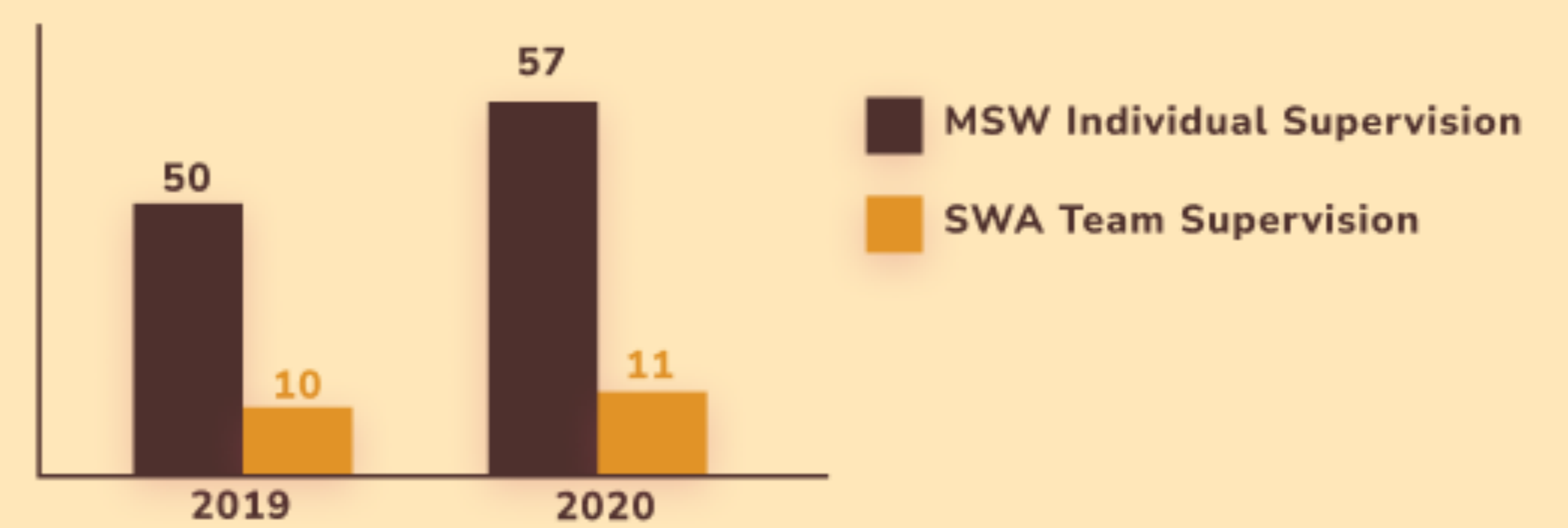
In 2020, with the COVID-19 outbreak, where the cross-institutional movement was restricted, supervision continued to be in place, but conducted via phone.

Type	Frequency of Individual Supervision session	Contact time Per Session
MSW Individual Supervision	Monthly	Up to 3 hours
SWA Team Supervision		

## RESULT

In April 2020, a formal review (adapted from "Supervision Outcomes Survey" by Starlight Community Services, USA & Social Work Supervision Guidelines" by SWAAB) was conducted and feedback was gathered from the supervisees (5 MSWs & 3 SWAs) through rating of the supervision they received in 2019.

No. of Supervision Sessions Conducted



In general, the feedback received was very **POSITIVE**, with **81.25%** indicated "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" in the formal review that supervision:

- ✓ Developed specific skills to be a more effective MSW/ SWA.
- ✓ Helped them to feel stronger & affirmed their efforts to become a professional.
- ✓ Improved supervisee's ability to conceptualise the cases.
- ✓ Supported supervisee in work challenges and assisted supervisee to manage stress more effectively.
- ✓ Ensured that organisation's standards are upheld.

## CONCLUSION

➤ Supervision is an integral part of social work and the successful implementation of supervision is made possible with the team's commitment to adherence to the supervision sessions scheduled. With the formalisation of supervision in SHP, supervision has evolved from being needs-driven to being more deliberate and structured.

The team will continue to work towards the contextualisation of supervision to the primary care setting with the focus on enhancing professional growth and competency of the MSWs and SWAs, and increasing the overall effectiveness of service delivery.



Moving forward, the team envisions to build the competency of the supervisors to further enhance the learning and professional growth of both the supervisors and the supervisees.

Head MSW may appoint MSW with job grade 13 and above as supervisor for the SWA team and newly-joined MSWs.