

# **TRAINEES WITH PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE PROBLEMS**

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# **ASSESSMENT OF TRAINEE'S COMPETENCE**

**Crucial part of our job as supervisors ('gate-keeping')**

**...and yet:**

- Vague and varied criteria and assessment methods**
- Leniency and halo biases**
- Concerns about unleashing unfit psychologists into independent professional practice ('gate-slipping')**

# **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE PROBLEMS: COMMON PROBLEM AREAS**

**Ethical Concerns**

**Mental Health Diagnosis \***

**Intrinsic characteristics**

**Counselling Skills**

**Ability to receive feedback**

**Self-reflection**

**Personal life difficulties**

**Procedural compliance**

**\* Not our role to diagnose, but can include drug and alcohol use.  
Complicated by Mandatory Reporting requirements**

# THE CONTEXT: SCIENCE AND ART OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY



# WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW TO ASSESS



# WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW TO BE A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST





# REALITIES OF TRAINING: SELF-DOUBT



# HOW STRESSED/BURNT OUT?

	Nurses (%)	Clin Psycs (%)	Clin Psyc Trainees	Criteria
Cushway & Tyler, 1994	30	29		GHQ (caseness)
Cushway et al 1996	40 Mental health nurses)	40		GHQ (caseness)
Cushway & Tyler, 1992			59	

Professional self doubt Number 1 factor responsible (17.6% of 55% variance). Factor unique to helping professions



# THE SOLUTION?: COMPETENCY APPROACH

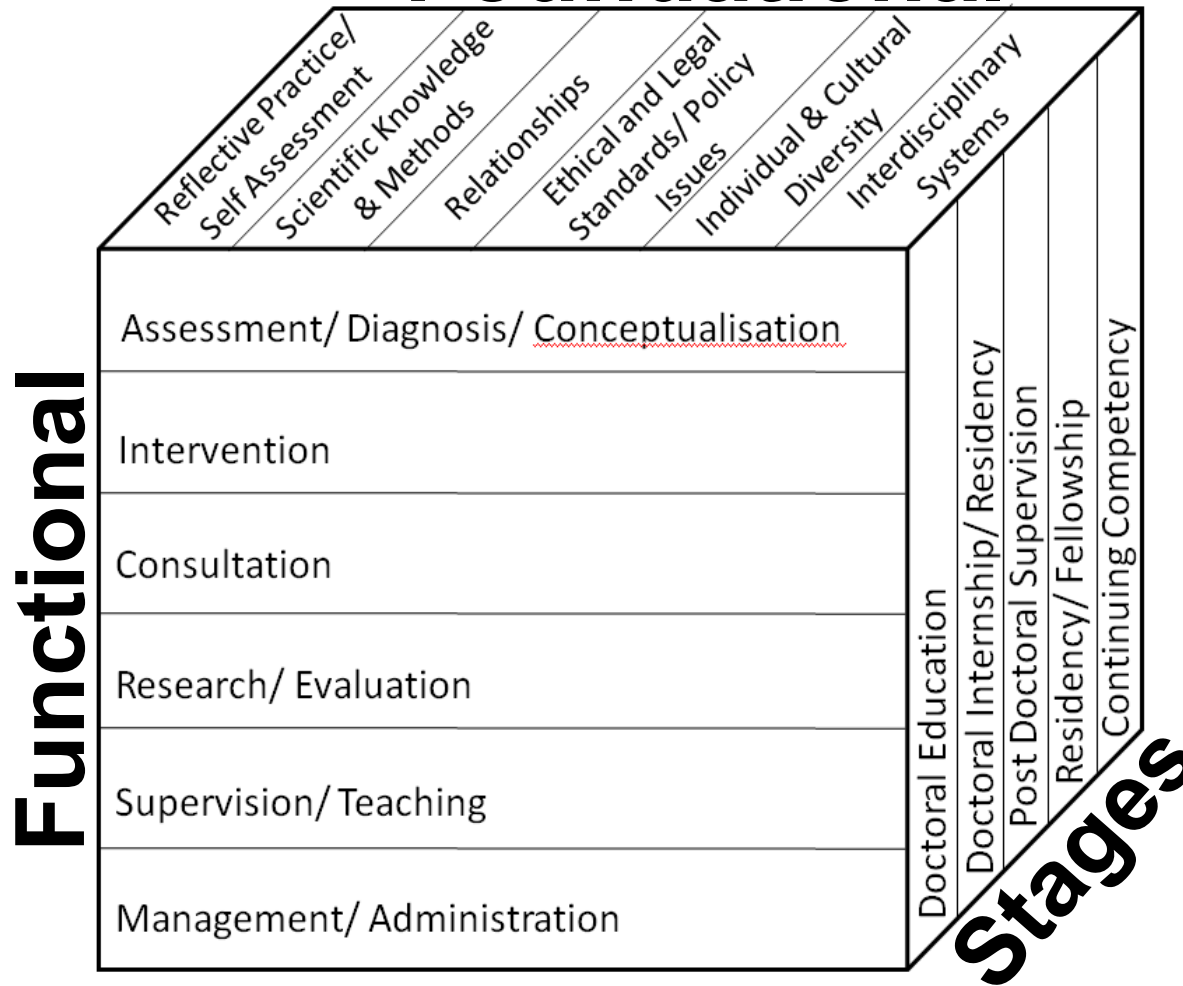
*Competency framework is a blueprint for professional training*

*Competency developmental plan, a blueprint for supervision (Gonsalvez, 2014)*

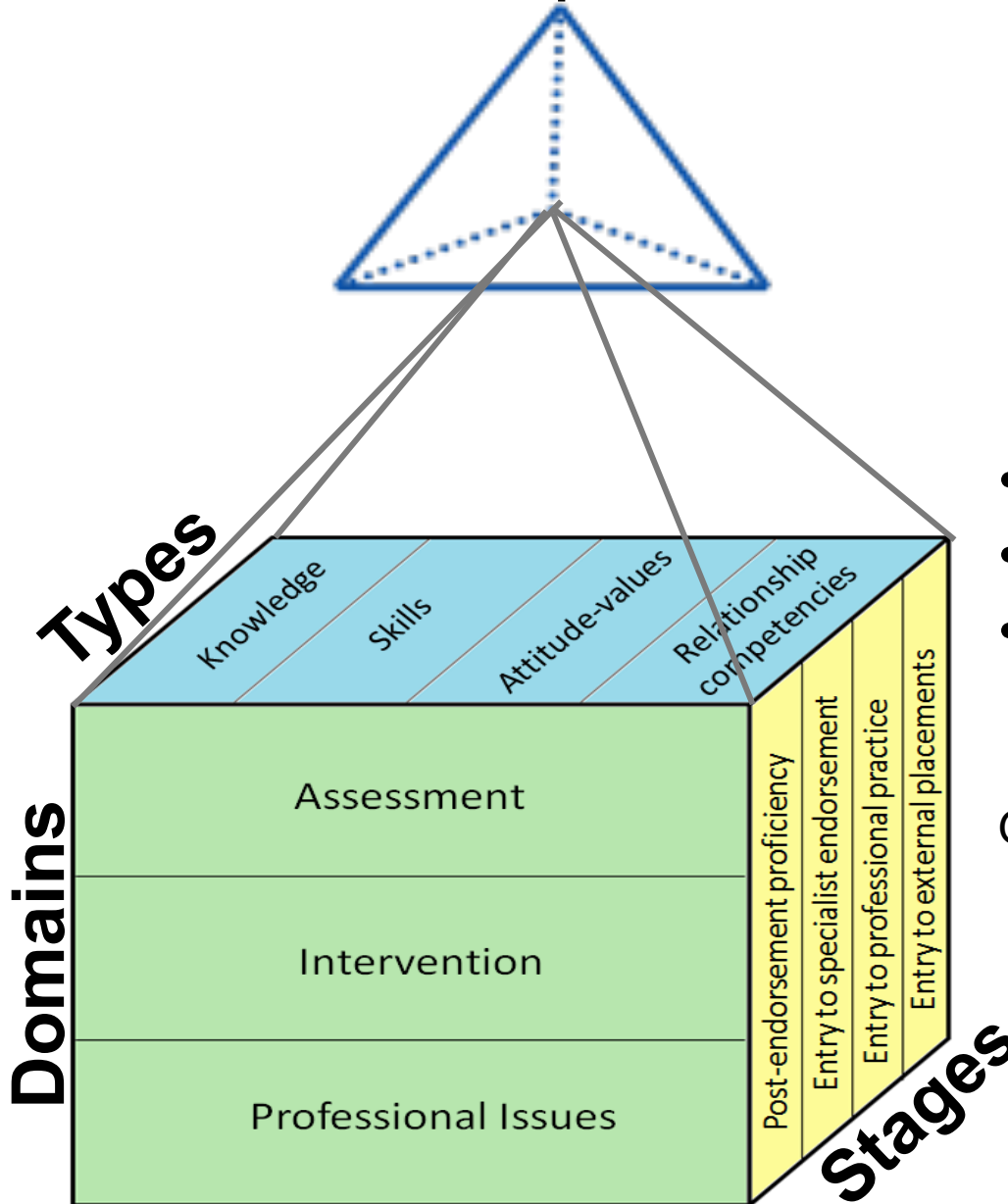


- The blueprint drives
  - Content
  - Method
  - Assessment
  - Evaluation

# Foundational



## Meta-Competencies



## Meta-Competencies

- Scientist-Practitioner
- Ethical-Practitioner
- Reflective-Practitioner

Gonsalvez & Crowe, 2015

# **CURRENT STUDY**

**Approaches used by Australian and New Zealand institutions offering clinical psychology training programs in identifying and managing professional competence problems in their trainees**

**Survey sent out February 2016 to Clinic Directors/Placement Coordinators in Oz/NZ**

# INCIDENCE OF PCP

**Low (1% to 4% in literature, mostly from USA)**

- depends on how “case” is defined and whether impairment is included

# **TRAINEE WITH PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE PROBLEM**

## **V “IMPAIRMENT”**

**Health Practitioner Regulation National Law  
(section 5)**

**Impairment defined as:**

***“a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect the person’s capacity to practice the profession”***

**Empathy problem (PCP)**

**v Personality Disorder (Impairment)**



# **RESULTS:**

## **COURSE & PLACEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- **31 respondents representing 22 institutions (18 Aust., 4 NZ) & 40 courses**
  - 20 (50%) Masters
  - 15 (37.5%) Masters/Dpsych/PhD
  - 4 (10%) Doctorate
  - 1 (2.5%) PG Dip ClinPsych (NZ)
- **Average annual intake 15.8 (range 8-30)**
- **Most courses had separate subject for placements (50%), and most included 3 placements (range 3-5)**

# **RESULTS:**

## **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE PROBLEMS**

### **Incidence:**

- **Significant problems – 2 trainees every 3 years**
- **Failed placement – 1 trainee every 3 years**

### **Type:**

- **Psychological (32%) – depression, personality, low resilience**
- **Behavioural (31%) – avoid admin task, lateness, D&A**
- **Developmental (27%) – lack education/experience**
- **Situational (10%) – life events**

# **RESULTS: IMPACT ON COURSE**

**‘Gut wrenching’**

**Huge burden on supervisor (internal/external),  
Course Director/staff, trainee, and others involved**

**Generally dealt with by clinical psychology course  
staff only**

**Legal action reported by 13% respondents (similar  
to 10% generally in literature)**

# **RESULTS:**

## **PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES**

- **Create and model a culture of self-care, ethical practice & openness (100%)**
- **Pre-requisites completed prior to placement (100%)**
- **Clearly articulated competencies (92%)**
- **On-going training in ethical practice (88%)**
- **Pass internal placement prior to start external (83%)**
- **Written policy for managing PCP (83%)**

# **RESULTS:**

## **REMEDIATION STRATEGIES**

**Most Courses (87%) allow trainee to repeat placement if failed, 1-4 times (modal once only)**

**Remediation required prior to recommence placement:**

- **Specially arranged supervisory practice (74%)**
- **Mentoring/tutoring (68%)**
- **Deferral/leave of absence (58%)**
- **Referral for psychological treatment (53%) (\*report required)**

**Also: extra coursework, reflective task on ethical issues, role-playing, observational learning**

# **RESULTS:**

## **ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

### **Clinical Psychology Practicum Competencies Rating Scale (CYPRS)**

- **Competency-based placement evaluation tool (online)**
- **4 stages: beginner (s1) to competent (s4)**
- **10 domains with 50 subdomains (3-9 subdomains in each domain)**



# CYPRS: DOMAINS

Competency Domains	
1	Counselling Competencies
2	Clinical Assessment Competencies
3	Case Formulation Competencies
4	Intervention Competencies
5	Psychological Testing Competencies
6	Scientist Practitioner Approach
7	Ethical Attitude and Behaviour
8	Professionalism
9	Reflective Practice Competencies
10	Placement Progress and Response to Supervision

# CΨPRS Ratings

- 10 overall domain scores + sub-domain items

7. Professional Skills Effective organisation and time management for client care and management. Clear and professional expressive skills, professional dress and demeanour. Good interactional skills with colleagues and other professionals.	Overall Rating			
	Stage 1 Beginner	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4 Competent
a) Ability to effectively structure and manage therapy time (e.g. prioritise, set limits, finish sessions on time).	●	●	●	●
b) Completion of professional tasks (e.g. evaluations, notes, reports, contacting clients, arriving promptly at meetings and appointments) in time.	●	●	●	●
c) Demonstrates an organised, disciplined approach to writing and maintaining notes and records.	●	●	●	●
d) Ability to organise and clearly present case material, and professional reports for a range of consumers.	●	●	●	●

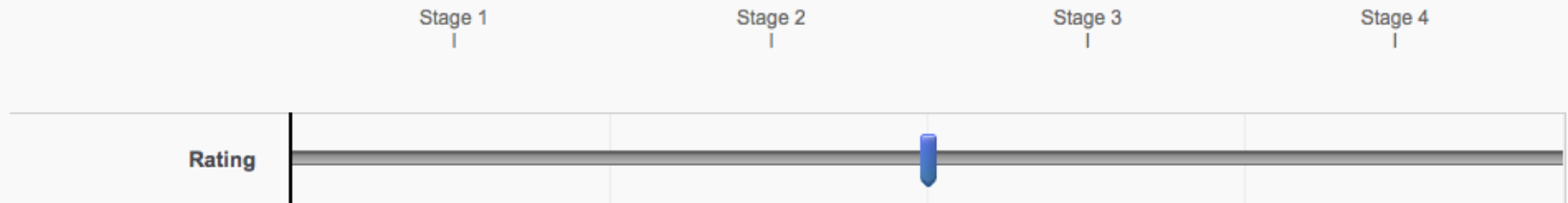
- Comparing performance with stage-based categories: Beginner (Stage 1) to Competent (Stage 4)

# EXAMPLE OVERALL ITEM

## CΨPRS At End Placement

### **Psychological Testing Competencies**

Applies knowledge to correctly select, administer, score and interpret common psychometric tests, and to generate psychometric reports. Demonstrates knowledge of psychometric issues and testing theory.



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0%  100%

N.B. Current version of CΨPRS returns a score with a max of

# **CYPRS**

- **Used by 64% of those surveyed**
- **75% of remaining respondents thought would be useful**
- **Most used subdomains to determine Pass/Fail**
- **Some had developed criteria on subdomain items for Pass/Fail – different Internal to External placement**

# **OTHER FINDINGS: INHERENT REQUIREMENTS**

## **Reasonable Adjustments & Inherent Requirements**

**Compliance with the Education Standards requires that educational institutions make reasonable adjustments (RAs) to accommodate the needs students with disabilities, however institutions retain the right to maintain the academic integrity of the courses they provide where they are inherent in or essential to the nature of the course.**

**44% of Courses using I.R., with 70% of these having written policy, and 40% using to determine Pass/Fail on placements**

# **WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?**

**How bad is bad enough?**

**Failure occurs infrequently, but when it does, involves significant distress and work.**

**Supervisors want to be nice.**

**Students who are incompetent but Supervisors rate them as a pass on rating scales.**

**Students failing on Professional behaviours, such as failing to attend, falsifying log books.**

**Ambivalence from University systems about failing a student.**

**Legal action.**



# PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

**Vexed issue for many years; not just a trainee problem**

**More than trainee might contribute to the problem and management.**

- Supervisory competence, mismatch between personalities, approaches to therapy, expectations.
- Measurement issues (what, how, who, when)
- Institutional issues (Course rules, policies regarding failing students, etc.)

# **SELECTION PROCESSES**

**Use of Inherent Requirements to guide selection?**

# **PREVENTION & REMEDIATION STRATEGIES**

- **Selection Procedures and inherent requirements**
- **Clear Policies and Procedures**
- **Clear competency benchmarks**
- **Training in self-care for trainees**
- **Training in difficult conversations for trainees and trainers**
- **Regular trainee evaluation**
- **Procedures and plans**
- **Formal process for fair termination**
- **Notification of student rights**
- **Support structures for staff**

# **PREVENTION & REMEDIATION STRATEGIES**

- **Therapy**
- **Extra Supervision**
- **Leave of absence**
- **Repeating Coursework**
- **Additional Reading**
- **Reviewing Clinical tapes**
- **Role plays**

# ADDRESSING BIASES: SUPERVISOR RATINGS OF TRAINEES ON COMPETENCY DOMAINS

Domain	Stage 1 Novice	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4 Comp
D1. Relational skills	-	-	30	70
D2. Clinical assessment skills	-	-	33	67
D3. Case formulation skills	-	-	37	63
D4. Intervention skills	-	-	31	69
D5. Psychometric skills	-	2.0	29	69
D6. Scientist-practitioner	-	-	20	80
D7. Ethical approach	-	-	20	80
D8. Professional skills	-	0.6	17	83
D9. Progress during placement	-	-	16	85
<b>Grand Mean</b>	-	<b>0.3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>75</b>

*Percentage of trainees (n=57) assigned by supervisors to the 4 developmental stages*

# VIGNETTE MATCHING PROCEDURE (VMAT)

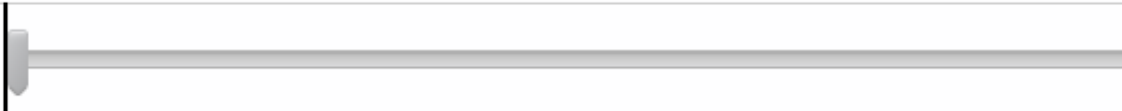
**Stage X** - Trainee GJ does not prioritise and effectively discharge casework, work, and personal responsibilities. Consequently she/he requires close supervision to monitor and ensure adequate client and agency outcomes. Because of a limited competency set or unreliable self-evaluations, Trainee GJ requires direction to ensure appropriate client care and professional development. Problematic communication styles and/or hypersensitivity to comments and feedback may lead to interpersonal conflict. Dress, presentation, and demeanour may also fall short of professional standards.

**Stage Y** - Trainee GK experiences some difficulties in managing the professional demands of the placement. This has included managing time and priorities in order to ensure that important tasks are completed in a timely manner. Her/his manner with team members is generally appropriate, except when under stress or during interactions with those in authority when appropriate confidence is lacking. She/he responds to feedback relating to many of these issues, but is inconsistent in identifying them for her/himself.

Please estimate, as best you can, the level your trainee has attained by clicking/moving the slider to the relevant point between the two stages.

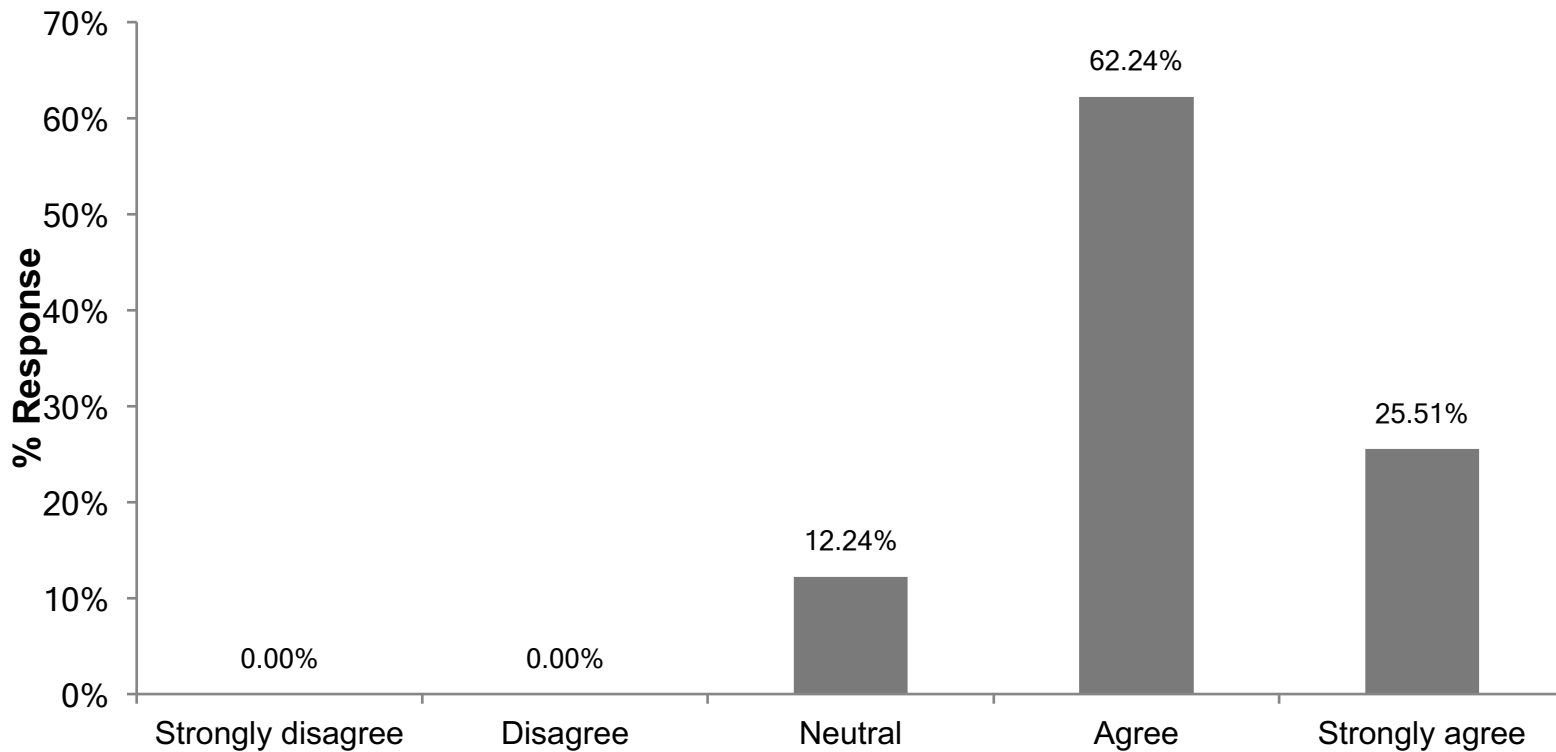
Stage X Stage Y

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Rating 

# ANY GOOD?: SUPERVISOR PERCEPTIONS OF VMAT

**VMAT more accurate and valid than CYPRS**



# **HYBRID ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

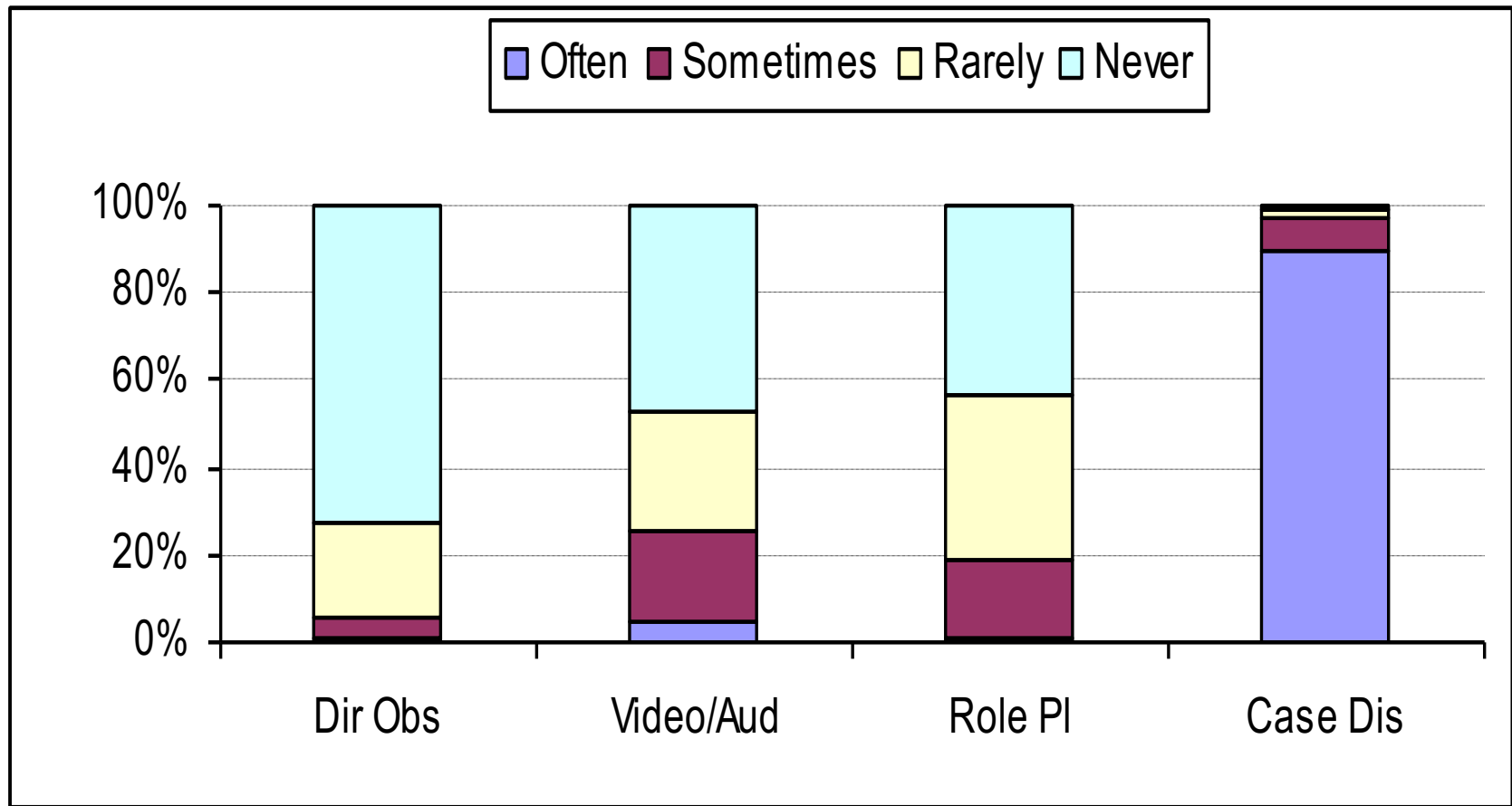
**Hybrid models (combination of CYPRS and VMAT) are currently in development and will be used by some sites from 2017**

[LINK TO HYBRID](#)



# NEED TO ACTUALLY OBSERVE!:

## USE OF TECHNIQUES BY SUPERVISORS



Direct observation, video/audio tapes, role play, case discussion (Townend, 2002)

**THANK YOU**