

The Supervisory Relationship

Developing and Sustaining a Working Alliance

What is Supervision?

“An intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member or members of a profession that is evaluative, hierarchical...extends over time.”
(Bernard and Goodyear, 2014)

“The primary functions of supervision are to foster professional development of the supervisee and monitor client welfare.”
(Bernsheur–Boswell, Polnyi, & Watts, 2013;
Corey, Haynes, Moulton, & Muratori, 2010)

A Model



The Interactional Nature of Supervision

The Goal: to develop the ability to provide competent client services. These are understood to include perceptual, conceptual, interventional and personal skills. The supervisory process is intended to help the practitioner develop increased self awareness in addition to clinical skills. It is understood to be a developmental process.

The Interactional Nature of Supervision

▶ The Process:

1. *Accountability* – taking personal responsibility for your behavior and its' impact on yourself and others.
2. *Tell the story* – an accounting of your work in verbal and/or written form. Coming to an understanding of what happened in services.
3. *Evaluation* – making judgements about the quality of the supervisees work.
4. *Education* – helping the practitioner learn techniques, skills, and enable the learning of best practices.

The Interactional Nature of Supervision

▶ The Supervisory Relationship:

1. *Power and Authority*– this is the nature of the relationship due to the evaluative nature of it. Postmodern thinking suggests that the collaborator or coach is the ideal supervision style. (This may depend upon where a supervisee is in their developmental stage)
2. *Shared Meaning*– development of mutual understanding and agreement. The goal is co-creation of “generative dialogue”. This will include a contract as well as the development of an approach to client services.
3. *Trust*–the development of trust results from mutual respect and provision of a safe environment for the supervisee to make mistakes and express doubts. Promotion of growth in the supervisee is a delicate balance, “personal accountability as a guideline for caring and relational integrity constitutes the foundation of trustworthiness.”

The Supervisory Relationship: How Style and Working Alliance Relate to Satisfaction among Cyber and Face to Face Supervisees

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History

- ▶ Clinical Supervision began as early as the 1920's during training for psychoanalysts.
- ▶ The earliest standards for supervisors began being adopted in the 1980's by AMHCA which was followed by CACREP in 2009 and ACA in 2014.
- ▶ The history of distance supervision indicates that in 1993, Wetchler, et al. developed a form of supervision which combined videotaped supervision sessions followed by telephone debriefing. Later in 1995, Myrick and Sabella wrote about asynchronous e-mail format supervision. By 2009 Conn, Roberts and Powell used email and chatrooms in a distance supervision protocol.

Literature Review

- ▶ “The Supervisor’s main function is to help him keep the door to learning open even in the face of discomfort and an essential way of accomplishing this was for the supervisor to be aware of what was happening within the supervisory relationship.” (Altucher, 1967)
- ▶ Bordin (1983) emphasized the importance of building a strong working alliance and noted that change and growth stemmed more from the working alliance than from the actual process of supervision.
- ▶ From here the constructs of a working alliance began being outlined, identified and evaluated and the Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSI) and the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI) were developed. The Supervisory Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed in 1996.

Literature Review

- ▶ 2002 – study of Face to Face versus online supervision indicated that FtF was strongly preferred although considered equally effective by participants (Coker et al.)
- ▶ 2009 – study of Face to Face versus hybrid email and chat rooms as well found that positive attitudes about technology in supervision were correlated with perceived technological competence (Conn, Roberts and Powell.
- ▶ 2010 – Mixed methods study f2f group supervision versus in person group supervision, no significant differences in satisfaction were found (Nelson et al.)

The Method

- ▶ Studied supervisees either enrolled in a CACREP or CACREP based program or having been enrolled within six months. Target an $n=150$, 75 in cyber and 75 in f2f
- ▶ Students completed 3 inventories: Supervisory Styles Inventory, Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory– trainee version and the Supervisory Satisfaction Questionnaire.
- ▶ Total participants = 90 (F2F=60, Cyber=30), 67% Caucasian, 33% African American (12), Hispanic(12) or other (6)

Findings

- ▶ Supervisory Style and Working Alliance are highly correlated with satisfaction in supervision.
- ▶ Supervisees who perceived their supervisor as attractive, interpersonally sensitive and task oriented were more satisfied with their supervisory experience.
- ▶ Supervisees also found traits of good rapport and client focus to improve their satisfaction with supervision.
- ▶ Cyber supervisees tended to rate the variables of the SSI and the SWAI higher than FtF supervisees overall indicating that format did not negatively impact satisfaction. (Perhaps overall technology competence has improved).
- ▶ FtF group results indicated that interpersonally sensitive was the only predictor of satisfaction whereas in Cyber supervision interpersonally sensitive, attractiveness and rapport were all significant. This is consistent with other studies that demonstrated “interpersonal sensitivity” as the only significant predictor of supervisee satisfaction.
- ▶ Study of qualitative responses of supervisees indicated that warmth, openness, supportiveness, and rapport were the most common responses about supervisor attributes that were important to supervisees.

Cyber Supervision Best Practice

- ▶ Ethical models of supervision all require a contract with supervisor and supervisee expectations outlined. In cyber-supervision it may be especially important to cover procedures for clinical emergencies.
- ▶ The supervisee should receive a clear explanation of how they will be evaluated and any concerns about how use of technology will factor in should be clarified.
- ▶ Ensuring the technological confidence of the supervisee is positively correlated with satisfaction with the relationship. A practice session or two is warranted along with directions for the conferencing site.
- ▶ Modeling of ethical behaviors is an important part of the supervision process. How PHI will be protected during cyber supervision should be discussed or provided on a FAQ sheet. This may help establish trust.
- ▶ Email communications were rated highly in some of the studies as a means to discuss cases. Development of encrypted email case discussions may bridge some of the gap for those who are less comfortable with the video conference format.
- ▶ Otherwise clearly, interpersonal sensitivity, rapport and client focus seem to rate the highest in importance to supervisees. Ensuring that supervisees have an opportunity to explore feelings of doubt and receive support will assist with a positive supervisory experience.

Resources

- ▶ https://www.corwin.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/5163_Austin_Final_Pages_Chapter_3.pdf
- ▶ https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsr edir=1&article=4919&context=utk_graddiss