

Theory and Practice of Clinical Supervision

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A “Whirlwind Tour” of the Supervision Literature

- Why discuss clinical supervision?
 - Status of supervision in the profession
 - Complex nature of supervision
- History and models of supervision
- Best practices
- Time to talk about your cases

Why discuss clinical supervision?

- Supervision is a major practice area
- Garfield and Kurtz (1976)
 - Practicing clinical psychologists
 - Supervision was fifth most common activity
- Norcross, Prochaska, and Gallagher (1993)
 - Members of APA Division 29 (Psychotherapy)
 - Supervision was second most common activity

Thought to be a key ingredient in therapist training

- Accrediting body requirements
- Licensure requirements
- Research evidence that supervision leads to improved...
 - clinical skills
 - therapeutic relationship
 - therapy outcome

Supervision is a complex activity

- Multiple interests
 - Supervisee well-being and professional development
 - Client welfare
 - Protection of the profession
- Multiple roles
 - Helper versus evaluator
 - Teacher versus counselor

Important ethical and legal issues

- Responsible for client welfare
 - Direct liability
 - Vicarious liability
- Boundary issues
- Informed consent
 - Client
 - Supervisee

Supervisors vary in ability

- Considerable variability in the quality of supervisees' experiences
- Supported by both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Examples of negative trainee (T) experiences with supervisors (S)

- T. came to supervision prepared to discuss cases and review tapes, but the S. used the entire session to self-disclose and process a recent event that the S had experienced.
- S. shut off the T's therapy session tape and asked, "Why are you showing this to me?"
- T. asked for more supportive feedback rather than just feedback about mistakes, and the supervisor declined to provide that kind of supervision.

Examples of the “good supervisory experience”

- “She really gave me permission to think about things without pressuring me to do anything.”
- “What was so great was that my S. was really affirming of...my ability to speak clearly...I felt like she appreciated those abilities that I had taken pride in the past and which I had felt, I just hadn't felt were being recognized at all, at any level.”
- “Maybe his [the S's] being willing to hear what I had to say, maybe it modeled, maybe I should consider what he has to say.”

Why isn't supervisor training required?

- Haley (1993):
 - “How to be a therapy supervisor without knowing how to change anyone”
- Faulty assumption:
 - Those who can do, can also teach

Current status of supervision training

- APA does not currently require supervision training as part of accreditation
- CACREP and AAMFT do require this
- Training is more common in counseling psychology than clinical psychology programs

Earliest models of formal clinical supervision

- 1920s: Beginnings
 - Max Eitingon established formal supervision at the Berlin Institute of Psychoanalysis
 - Supervision required by International Psychoanalytic Society
- 1930s: Rift
 - Budapest School: supervision as therapy
 - Viennese School: supervision as education

Types of supervision models

- Models based on theories of psychotherapy
- Developmental models
- Social role models

Modern psychodynamic models

- Attention to the relationship dynamics
 - Client-therapist
 - Supervisor-supervisee
- Parallel process (Searles, 1955)
 - Client-therapist ↔ Supervisor-supervisee

Person-centered models

- Belief in growth potential
- Emphasis on facilitative conditions
 - Empathy, genuineness, warmth
- Rogers:
 - “No clean way” to differentiate supervision from therapy

Behavioral Models

- First articulated by Wolpe (1966)
- Therapist performance is a function of learned skills
- Foundations of current approaches
 - Operationalize needed skills
 - Establish trusting relationship
 - Conduct a skill analysis
 - Set goals
 - Devise strategies to achieve goals, using principles of learning theory

Cognitive Models

- Similar to behavioral, but with cognitive twist
- Challenge cognitive errors and misperceptions
- Liese and Beck (1997) on beliefs that can reduce supervisors' effectiveness:
 - “It is bad when someone’s feelings get hurt.”
 - “I need to be right all of the time.”
 - “It is most important to know how you feel about your client

Models of Therapist Development

- Assumptions
 - Supervisees go through different stages of development
 - A different supervisory approach is needed for each stage
- Research
 - Weak research designs
 - Stages are consistent with perceptions
 - Trainee experience level is linked with supervisor behavior

Integrated Development Model— Stoltenberg et al. (1998)

- Three developmental levels
 1. High level of dependence
 2. Dependency-autonomy conflict
 3. Conditional dependency
- Three domains of developmental change
 1. Autonomy
 2. Self-other awareness
 3. Motivation to develop skills
- Eight skill areas

IDM Application

- Issue: Supervisee has difficulty identifying realistic goals for a client who requests assertiveness training
- How might our understanding of this situation change depending on supervisees' levels of...
 - Autonomy and experience?
 - Self versus client focus? Self-awareness?
 - Motivation to develop skills?
- How might these factors inform one's supervision strategy?

Social Role Models

- Ekstein (1964):
 - “Supervision of psychotherapy: Is it teaching? Is it administration? Or is it therapy?”
- Basic assumptions
 - Supervisors must assume different roles with supervisees
 - Roles are chosen on the basis of a number of factors
 - Developmental stage
 - Theoretical orientation
 - Nature of specific issue

Discrimination Model (Barnard, 1979): Basics

- Focus is on roles related to training rather than evaluation
- Supervisor first attends to focus area:
 - Intervention skills
 - Conceptualization skills
 - Personalization skills
- Supervisor next chooses role:
 - Teacher, counselor, or consultant

Discrimination Model: Application

- Issue: Supervisee has difficulty identifying realistic goals for a client who requests assertiveness training
- Focus:
 - Conceptualization
- How to choose whether to use a teacher or counselor role?
- Examples of interventions using these roles?

Best Practices in Supervision

- Can only touch on a few today
- Limited body of research
- Handout

Supervisory Relationship

- Perhaps the most important “best practice”
- Supervisory alliance predicts
 - Supervisees’ willingness to disclose
 - Client perception of therapeutic alliance
- Supervisory alliance related to
 - Supervisor ethical behavior
 - Use of effective evaluation practices
 - Supervisor self-disclosure (professional)

Setting the Groundwork for a Good Supervisory Relationship

- Value supervision and your supervisees
- Create a supportive learning environment
- Work to reduce anxiety
- Initiate a thorough informed consent process
- Include supervisee in setting goals, planning, and evaluation process
- Normalize mistake making
- Discuss barriers to trust (e.g., role ambiguity)
- Validate differences in perspective/approach

Record keeping: The Supervision Activity Log

- Benefits
 - Can facilitate supervisory process
 - Can help when facing legal issues or impairment
- Include
 - Date, time, length of session; modality
 - Pre-session goals, next session goals
 - Major topics
 - Client- and supervisee-focused interventions
 - Risk management review

Informed Consent

- Basic ethical practice
- Protection against malpractice charges
- Three levels to consider
 - Clients understand parameters of therapy
 - Clients understand how supervision will affect them
 - Supervisees understand parameters of supervision

Informed Consent and Supervision: Client Consent

- Supervisee training status
- Supervisee observation method
- Who will be involved in supervision
- Impact of supervision on confidentiality
- Benefits of supervision
- Contact info for supervisor
- Policies regarding discomfort working with the supervisee

Informed Consent and Supervision: Supervisee Consent

- Consider creating a “Supervision Contract”
 - Supervisor professional disclosure
 - Purpose, goals, objectives
 - Nature and context of supervision services
 - Responsibilities of supervisor & supervisee
 - Procedural considerations
 - Evaluation procedures
 - Ethical and legal issues

Evaluation

- Defining aspect of supervision
- Two types of evaluation
 - Formative feedback
 - Summative feedback
- Two core problems
 - Defining competence
 - Conflicts with self-concept as a “helper”
- Can result in avoidance of evaluator role

Evaluation Tips

- Take on the challenge!
- Discuss the evaluation methods and criteria from the very start
- Address natural vulnerability
- Model openness to feedback, self-critique
- Encourage self-evaluation
- Qualities of good feedback: CORBS
 - Clear, Owned, Regular, Balanced, Specific

Lets give CORBS a test drive...

