The Supervisory Relationship
Overview

• Part I
  • The influence of individual and developmental differences
  • Processes and issues of the supervisory triad and dyad

• Part II
  • Conflict: When problems arise in the supervisor-supervisee relationship
Ask Yourself...

- As a supervisor, how will I develop the relationship into one of mutual trust and respect?
- What are some ways I may have displayed resistance as a supervisee?
- What can I learn from this and apply to my work with reluctant supervisees?
Personal and Interpersonal Issues in Supervision

Three essential components

1. Phases of the relationship
2. Interpersonal structure of the relationship
3. The supervisory contract
Early Phase

- Clarifying the nature of the relationship
- Developing ways to collaborate effectively
- Designing a supervision contract
- Selecting teaching interventions
- Developing competencies
- Designing treatment plans
Mature or Middle Phase

- Emphasis is on increasing the individual nature of the relationship
- Promoting social bonding
- Behavior becomes less role bound
- Supervisees develop skills of case conceptualization
- Increase supervisee’s level of confidence
Termination Phase

- Supervisees understand the linkage between theory and practice more fully
- Less need for direction from the supervisor
- Summative evaluation occurs including a discussion of the meaning of termination, feelings, and thoughts
- Future and developmental goals are discussed
Interpersonal Structure

1. Supervisor-supervisee relationship
2. Power and authority
3. Parallel process
4. Personhood
5. Supervisory Triad
6. Supervisory Dyad
Interpersonal Structure

1. **Trust**: the ability to rely on another with a certain sense of predictability

2. **Self-disclosure**: willingness of the supervisor and supervisee to be open to and discuss all issues that may arise in the supervisory relationship

3. **Transference**: Supervisee sees you as teacher, mom, dad, and reacts accordingly (ex: anxiety about ‘doing well’ for the supervisor)
Interpersonal Structure

4. Be aware of **countertransference** due to:
   - General personality characteristics
   - Inner conflicts reactivated by the supervision situation
   - Countertransference reactions to the individual supervisee
   - Countertransference to the supervisees transference
Interpersonal Structure

5. **Diversity issues**
   - Cultural experience
   - Gender
   - Cognitive and ego development
   - Professional identity
   - Experience level
   - Theoretical orientation
   - Self-presentation
Interpersonal Structure

6. **Appropriate boundaries**: extending the boundary beyond supervision can complicate the supervisory relationship

Supervisors must take full responsibility for:

- Determining the limits of the relationship
- Taking action when they believe the boundaries are unclear
Power and Authority

- **Power**: the ability to influence or control others
- **Authority**: the right to do so

**Supervisors must:**

- Inform supervisees of the evaluative nature regardless of theory (Feminist and person-centered models)
- Be clear about goals, expectations, evaluation criteria, and limits of confidentiality in supervision
Parallel Process

The supervisee’s interaction with the supervisor or supervision group that parallels the client’s behavior with the supervisee as therapist.
Personhood

- Beliefs, values, attitudes, gender, ethnicity, spirituality, religion, abortion, marriage and divorce, sexual orientation, parenting, the change process, suicide, end-of life decisions
- Be aware of bias and tendency to impose values
- Values-free supervision is virtually impossible!!
Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Positive supervisor characteristics in order of importance

1. Good clinical skills/knowledge
2. An accepting supervisory climate
3. Desire to train/investment in supervision
4. Matching supervision with supervisees’ development
5. Providing constructive feedback
6. Empathic
7. Flexible and available
8. Possessing good relationship skills
9. Experienced clinician
Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Supervisor characteristics that have an adverse impact (in order)

1. Being judgmental/overly critical
2. Personally or theoretically rigid
3. Not committed to the supervisory process
4. Unavailable
5. Limited clinical knowledge and skills
6. Unethical or demonstrating poor boundaries
7. Too self-focused
8. Lack of compassion, arrogant, unable to provide helpful feedback, unprepared, inexperienced at supervision
Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Positive supervisee characteristics

1. Desire to learn and improve
2. Non-defensive and open to feedback
3. General openness and flexibility
4. Possessing knowledge and good clinical skills
5. Intelligent
6. Responsible and prepared
7. Willing to take initiative and risks
8. Good interpersonal skills, ability to be empathic, self-acceptance, insight, genuineness, questioning, focus on the client, and maturity

Copyright 2013 All About the Family LLC
Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Supervisee characteristics that hinder the process

- Lack of openness
- Fear of evaluation
- Personal rigidity
- Defensiveness
- Arrogance
- Lack of motivation or interest in supervision or clinical work

- Lack of intelligence
- Psychopathology
- Immaturity
- Poor knowledge/skill base, poor interpersonal skills and boundaries, unprepared and disorganized, passive, lacking insight
Challenges for supervisors

Conflict with supervisees

Dealing with supervisee issues:

- Doubts and fears
- Unresolved personal problems
- Avoiding the role of problem solver
- Identifying countertransference with clients
- Respecting diverse value systems
- Difficulty with taking risks
- Anxiety
- Reactions to client failures
Supervisor/Supervisee Compatibility

1. Stable individual variables
   - Learning style/personality
2. Attributes that change over time
   - Cognitive development
   - Experience in the field
Personality

MBTI and supervision (Ivey)

- E – Extroversion/I- Introversion, S – Sensing/N - Intuiting, F-Feeling/T-Thinking, J-Judging/P-Perceiving
- Most dramatic differences between supervisors and supervisees had to do with the T-F scale and J-P scale
- While a T-J supervisor (most common profile) will find F supervisees frustrating, FP trainees may be more capable of achieving empathy with clients
Learning Style

- Sensorimotor: affected emotionally by experiences
- Concrete: see the world through linear cause-effect lens
- Formal: analyze the world from multiple perspectives and are naturally reflective
- Dialectic: self-challenging, think about how they think, broad conceptualizations
Attributes that Change over Time

1. Theoretical Orientation
3. Supervisee need for Supervision direction
4. Cognitive Complexity (skill acquisition, developmental growth due to supervision, Bloom’s taxonomy)
Supervisory Triad

Supervision as a triadic system

- The client
- Client - supervisee
- Supervisee-supervisor
- Supervisee is the common link
Triad Issues in Supervision

- Parallel process
  - Some characteristic of the client-therapist interaction is repeated in supervision
  - Intrapsychic

- Isomorphism
  - In systems therapy, the “recursive replication” that occurs between therapy and supervision including: the need to join, setting goals, and thinking in stages
  - May replicate FOO patterns
The Supervisory Dyad

- Supervisor and supervisee agree on goals
- Agree on tasks necessary to achieve those goals
- Bond develops between supervisor and supervisee
- Make supervisor and supervisee expectations explicit
  - Roles, behaviors
- Assess supervisee’s expectations

Supervisee ← Supervisor
References


