

Understanding Supervisee Resistance

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OBJECTIVES OF THIS COURSE

- ▶ **To Learn How To Conceptualize Resistance**
 - ▶ The Integrated Developmental Model
- ▶ **To Learn About The Different Types of Resistance**
 - ▶ Games
 - ▶ Case studies
- ▶ **To Learn How To Counteract Resistance**
 - ▶ Techniques
- ▶ **To Be Introduced To Prevention Strategies**
 - ▶ The Interview
- ▶ **To Learn About Remediation**
 - ▶ Methods
 - ▶ Case examples
- ▶ **To Learn About Termination Process**
- ▶ **To Be Introduced To The Supervisor Toolkit**



Supervisee Resistance

- ▶ It is a “Self-protective behavior” employed in the face of some threat.
 - ▶ Supervisee resists the influence of the supervisor or supervision itself
 - ▶ May become non-compliant with tasks related to supervision
 - ▶ Non-compliant with client directives
- ▶ It is a challenge to be overcome, **NOT** something the supervisee should be blamed for.
- ▶ Resistance is even appropriate at times.



The Integrated Development Model

Issues/Stages	Self and Other Awareness	Motivation	Autonomy
Stage 1			
Stage 2			
Stage 3			



The Integrated Developmental Model Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth 1998

There are Eight Clinical Activities that are assessed at all three stages of the model.

1. Intervention skills competence
 2. Assessment techniques
 3. Interpersonal assessment
 4. Client conceptualization
 5. Individual differences
 6. Theoretical orientation
 7. Treatment plans and goals
 8. Professional ethics
-



The Integrated Developmental Model – Early Phase

These are the activities that take place in the Early Phase of the Model.

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

The Integrated Developmental Model – Middle Phase

THREE OVERRIDING STRUCTURES THAT ARE EXAMINED DURING THE THREE STAGES.

I. AUTONOMY IS THE FIRST STRUCTURE.

- ▶ The initial success brings about a desire for autonomy which can result in a dependency-autonomy conflict
- ▶ The supervisee wants to be more independent.
- ▶ The supervisee also wants to seek more supervision.
- ▶ There is a struggle within the supervisee over this dependency/independent conflict.



The Integrated Developmental Model – Middle Phase

2. This is the second structure. Self and Other Awareness

- ▶ Other awareness
 - ▶ Begins to focus more on the cognitive and emotional experiences of the client. In the first phase, the supervisee had focused on the self – how do I sound, were those the right words, etc.
 - ▶ As the counselor gains experience, an awareness develops of the impact of the client
- ▶ On the counselor
 - ▶ Counselor can become overly involved in client's pain and cannot be objective enough to help the client.
 - ▶ Counselor can become overly pessimistic/ optimistic when the clients do not change.



The Integrated Developmental Model – Middle Phase

3. The Third Structure is Motivation.

- ▶ Counselors begin to feel that counseling is not as powerful as they once thought, nor is it easily learned. They are leaving the early phase when they thought they could help everyone and solve all the problems.
- ▶ Having success with clients and receiving positive feedback will bring back confidence and motivation.



PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THIS MIDDLE PHASE

1. Counselors get discouraged at the lack of visible success with clients
2. Counselors begin to make derogatory comments about their clients
3. Counselors do not follow through with homework
4. Counselors begin to display the emotional symptoms of their clients
5. Counselors ask for more supervision time; more specific interventions



Normalizing Resistance

- ▶ Results from the ongoing relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee
- ▶ Results from the supervisee's professional development of role identity
- ▶ Results from the supervisor's evaluation of the supervisee

- ▶ Asking yourself “What is going on with this supervisee? What is different for them?”



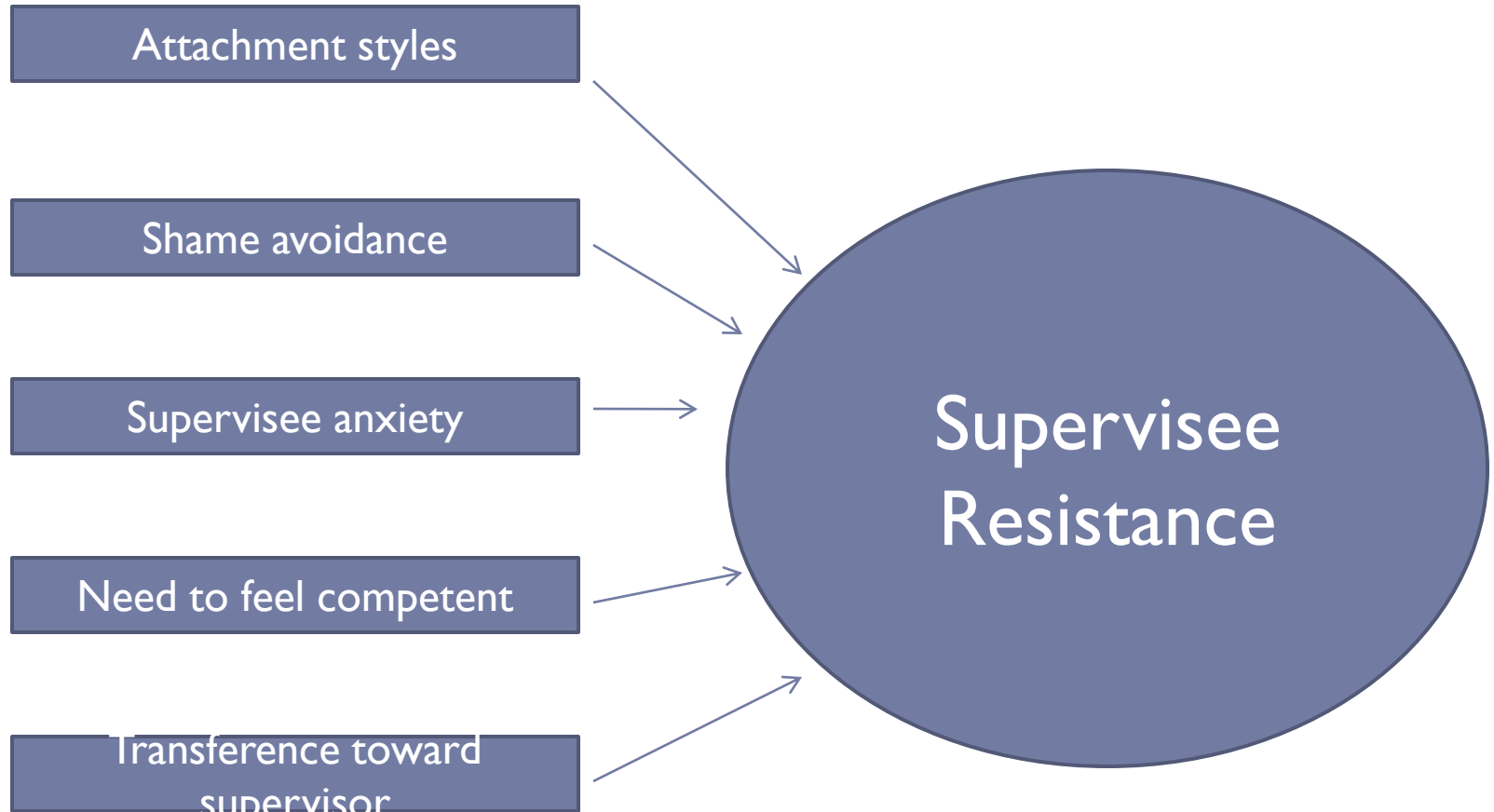
Supervisee Resistance

- ▶ Recognize it – Supervisor's responsibility
- ▶ Name it
- ▶ Allow it
- ▶ Don't judge it
- ▶ Process it

RESISTANCE WILL ALMOST ALWAYS NEED TO BE
DEALT WITH EXPLICITLY



Origins of Resistance



Supervisee Anxiety

- ▶ Creates defensiveness
- ▶ Defensive behaviors can reduce anxiety
- ▶ Deal with the supervisor's anxiety so that resistance decreases
 - ▶ Example: Suggesting an intervention and the supervisee responding with "it will never work."



Challenges for Supervisors

- Supervisee anxiety
- Supervisee's reactions to client failures



Challenges for Supervisees

- Dealing with doubts and fears
- Avoiding the role of problem solver
- Identifying countertransference
- Respecting diverse value systems
- Challenging themselves
- Dealing with client failures/tragedies



Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Positive **supervisor** characteristics in order of importance

- ▶ Good clinical skills/knowledge
- ▶ An accepting supervisory climate
- ▶ Desire to train/investment in supervision
- ▶ Matching supervision with supervisees' development
- ▶ Providing constructive feedback
- ▶ Empathic
- ▶ Flexible and available
- ▶ Possessing good relationship skills
- ▶ Experienced clinician

Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Supervisor characteristics that have an adverse impact (in order)

- ▶ Being judgmental/overly critical
- ▶ Personally or theoretically rigid
- ▶ Not committed to the supervisory process
- ▶ Unavailable
- ▶ Limited clinical knowledge and skills
- ▶ Unethical or demonstrating poor boundaries
- ▶ Too self-focused
- ▶ Lack of compassion, arrogant, unable to provide helpful feedback, unprepared, inexperienced at supervision

Characteristics that facilitate or hinder the supervision process

Positive **supervisee** characteristics

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

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

Five Types of Resistance (Bauman)

1. Submission – the supervisor has all the answers
2. Turning the tables as a diversionary tactic to move away from the supervisee's skills or competence
3. Pleading “frailty” “I’m no good”; change the focus away from deficits; “feel sorry for me”
4. Helplessness by absorbing all the information from the supervisor; writing down everything the supervisor says
5. Self-protection by blaming external forces for problems; “the agency_____”; “the client_____”



Games Supervisees Play

- ▶ Supervisees try to manipulate or control supervision:

Ask yourself what Verbal and Nonverbal behaviors are demonstrated during the supervision sessions.

- ▶ Not making eye contact
- ▶ Body language showing disinterest
- ▶ Refusing to dialogue on cases
- ▶ Speaking so much and not allowing the supervisor to interject



Categories of Games (Kadushin)

- I. The supervisee attempts to control the demands placed upon them
 - ▶ Example: The supervisor gives reading and research as homework but the supervisee claims they do not have any extra time .

How does the supervisor address this problem?



Games

2. The supervisee uses flattery to detour the evaluation process.

- ▶ “I have told everyone what a wonderful supervisor you are.”
- ▶ “How do you know so much?”

What does the supervisor say in response to such statements?



Games

3. Attempts to redefine the relationship and make the relationship more ambiguous
- ▶ Requests to meet for coffee
 - ▶ Requests to meet less frequently
 - ▶ Talking about personal issues or asking the supervisor about personal issues

What boundaries need to be established?



Games

4. Reducing power disparity when the supervisee tries very hard to demonstrate knowledge. The supervisee tries to prove that the supervisor is “not too smart.”
 - ▶ “I read this book on ADHD and it contradicts what we talked about last week. Have you read this book?”

How does the supervisor respond when challenged with such statements?



Games

5. Requesting undue prescriptions for dealing with clients
 - ▶ Trying to put the supervisor in an awkward position to come up with many interventions.
 - ▶ One intervention is not enough for the supervisee. They want everything that is in your brain.

How do you handle this?



Games

6. Seeking reassurance by reporting how poorly work is progressing

- ▶ Criticizing colleagues, clients, everyone else is wrong.
- ▶ If the supervisee can place the attention on everyone else, perhaps the supervisor will not look closely at what they are or are not doing.



Games

7. Asking others to erode supervisor authority

- ▶ Consulting with other professionals and then asking them to speak up in a meeting to make the supervisor look bad
- ▶ Or telling the supervisor that you discussed this case with others and they disagree with the supervisor's directions.

What does the supervisor need to do to counteract this subversive game?



Games

8. Selectively sharing information to receive a more positive evaluation
 - ▶ Only wanting to talk about the successes with clients rather than the struggles or problems
 - ▶ The supervisor needs to structure the sessions so that they focus on both successes and failures.

What is one approach that might work?



Games

9. Blaming the supervisor for failure

- ▶ “I do not have enough supervision time.”
- ▶ “You do not seem to be paying attention to me during supervision.”
- ▶ “You are asking me to do too much homework.”

The supervisor needs to find a way to put this back on the supervisee. What is one statement that may work?



Counteracting Resistance

- ▶ **The relationship is critical**
 - ▶ Trust, respect, rapport and empathy
- ▶ **How the supervisory relationship is viewed**
 - ▶ The relationship is crucial vs. viewing therapeutic work as the crucial element



Counteracting Resistance

1. Find the source of anxiety
2. Brainstorm appropriate strategies to cope – refuse to play the games
3. Share awareness of game playing with the supervisee



Techniques for Counteracting Resistance

1. Interpret the resistance
2. Provide feedback
3. Clarify to restate the supervisee's behavior
4. Generalize the resistance to other settings; take the focus away from just the supervision
5. Role playing
6. Alter-ego role playing
7. Audio taping supervision sessions
8. Positive reframing



What to do when your supervisee is overly dependent

▶ Behaviors

- ▶ What do I do now? How do you do this? I'm confused
- ▶ Supervisee consistently defers to you /your opinion
- ▶ I don't do this very well. You do this better than I do (comments designed to elicit a positive response).

▶ Response

- ▶ Turn the question or statement back to the supervisee to encourage him/her to take responsibility
- ▶ Be persistent and defer back. Explore the need to defer.
- ▶ Don't respond. If it persists, discuss the dynamic directly.



What to do when your supervisee is overly dependent

▶ Behaviors

- ▶ Transference – supervisee sees you as mom or dad
- ▶ Need to make frequent contact with supervisor
- ▶ Supervisor feels overly-responsible, overwhelmed, dislike/disrespect for supervisee (“this supervisee is high-maintenance”)

▶ Response

- ▶ Process transference directly with supervisee
 - ▶ Help them understand “branch” and “root” decisions
 - ▶ Self-reflection and seek to understand your level of responsibility. Supervisors need supervision too! Establish new boundaries as necessary.
-



What to do when your supervisee is not taking risks in learning

- ▶ **Most common in early developmental phase**
 - ▶ “If I disclose all of my weaknesses, my supervisor will think I am an incompetent counselor and [insert consequence]”
 - ▶ Variables that influence risk-taking
 - ▶ Confidence,
 - ▶ Self-esteem
 - ▶ Courage



Encouraging supervisees to take risks

- ▶ If a dual relationship exists (professor/supervisor, program director/supervisor) process the implications openly and honestly
- ▶ Make risk-taking one of the goals in the supervision plan
- ▶ Maintain an open dialogue
- ▶ Encouragement vs praise
 - ▶ Focus on building an internal reward system
 - ▶ Praise behavior, not the person



What to do when your supervisee feels anxious

- ▶ Encourage dialogue about fears
- ▶ Offer Support
 - ▶ Understanding
 - ▶ Encouragement
 - ▶ Affirmation
- ▶ Use the role of consultant or collaborator
- ▶ Goal set in a way that makes tasks less formidable
- ▶ Clearly state expectations and provide clear relevant feedback
- ▶ Supervisor self-disclosure and humor



What to do when your supervisee is continually not prepared for supervision

- ▶ Define “being prepared”
- ▶ Help supervisees feel safe in supervision
 - ▶ Supervisees who are trying to hide their work may appear unprepared
- ▶ Explore personal issues that may be interfering with supervision and be prepared to refer
 - ▶ Discouragement
 - ▶ Disorganization
 - ▶ Lack of commitment



What to do when your supervisee says “let’s go grab a cup of coffee”

...or what to do when a dual relationship may cloud the supervisory relationship

- ▶ Respond in a fashion that
 - ▶ Will not compromise the gatekeeper/evaluative function of supervision
 - ▶ Reflects consideration of the supervisory relationship
 - ▶ Establishes a clear boundary in a respectful manner
- ▶ Document your decision
- ▶ **It is the supervisor’s responsibility to manage the boundaries**



What to do when your supervisee fails to follow policies or supervisor recommendations

- ▶ **Restate the directive and ask how the supervisee will meet the requirement**

“That sounds like a tough situation for you [insert tough situation here]. Since the rule has to be followed, how might you handle this another time?”

“I’m a bit troubled by this [failure to implement a suggested intervention]. This is the second time you haven’t followed what we discussed. What’s stopping you from doing this?”

- ▶ **Avoid over-identification with the supervisee’s issues**
- ▶ **Be persistent in helping the supervisee adhere to obligations**



What to do when your supervisee asks questions?

...or which questions merit answers, and which ones don't

▶ Question that merits a direct answer:

“How do I contact the state licensing board?”

▶ Questions that supervisors can answer, but the supervisee may be better served answering for him/herself:

“What else could I have done with this client?”

“Was that the correct response/intervention?”

▶ Respond with:

“I've seen you respond successfully to other clients in similar situations. What makes this situation different?”

“What do you want to do?”

“What are you thinking and feeling when that happens?”



What to do when your supervisee takes responsibility for a client failure

...or “My client [relapsed, quit therapy, did not show up, did not complete an agreed-upon contract] and it’s all my fault!”

- ▶ Challenge supervisees to develop alternate explanations
- ▶ Challenge the supervisee to examine thinking errors:
 - ▶ I can help every client
 - ▶ If a client does not change, I must be incompetent
 - ▶ I can control my client’s life
- ▶ Explore supervisee’s fear and anxiety
- ▶ Support through encouragement and affirmation



CASE EXAMPLE Read the following and think of possible games and then consider what remediation might be used.

- ▶ Mary is a supervisee and works in a school. The supervisor went to her school for one of their first meetings and Mary was not there. She had “forgotten” that she had an outside appointment. Mary missed a second appointment when she was out running and forgot about the supervision appointment. The third no-show occurred when Mary was working on a project at home and did not want to stop and drive to supervision.



CASE EXAMPLE Read the case study and decide what games are being used and what remediation might be used.

- ▶ Joan has been in supervision for over a year and has changed jobs three times and is considering a job change again. With each new job, she has complained about the clients (unresponsive and unwilling to change) and the agency she has worked for (people not helpful, interpersonal problems with colleagues and bosses).



CASE EXAMPLE Read the case study and identify what might be going on with the supervisee but how the supervisor can assist the supervisee.

- ▶ Joe is an elementary counselor and discusses in group supervision a case concerning a 3rd grade boy. The boy has stated that he does not want to live and is very sad. Joe discounts the severity of the boy's statements, but the group members confront him about his thoughts. They help him through the process of what to do during a suicidal assessment and he promises to do it the next day.
- ▶ Joe is to contact the supervisor the next day. The supervisor finally has to call Joe after not hearing from him. Joe decided that he would wait until after the holiday break to do the suicidal assessment with the child.



PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- ▶ Make sure that you and the supervisee are a good match
 - ▶ Make sure that the credentials are accurate.
 - ▶ Pay attention to how you are feeling during the initial interview.
 - ▶ Think about the interview and do not make an immediate decision.
1. The Interview
 2. Transcripts
 3. References



Interview Questions pg 1

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS FOR POTENTIAL SUPERVISEES

During the initial contact with the intern (usually by phone), the supervisor will set up an in-person interview and ask the intern to bring a resume, a graduate transcript, and a list of references.

The Resume

All interns from a graduate program should be able to put together a resume. A quick scan for spelling and punctuation will give the supervisor an idea if the intern is conscientious about written work and has taken the time to use spell and grammar check. The resume can also serve as a base for questions about prior employment, etc.

Questions from the resume:

1. What volunteer or paid positions have they had in the counseling field?
2. What did they like or dislike about the work?
3. What volunteer or paid positions have they had in the non-counseling field?
4. What did they like or dislike about that work?
5. Did they have any conflicts with employers/supervisors in any of the above positions?
6. How were those conflicts resolved or were they not resolved?

The Graduate Transcript

The state licensure boards will review transcripts in order to make sure that the intern has the correct courses both in content and quantity. This is usually not the responsibility of the interviewing supervisor.

The supervisor will want to scan the transcript for any grades of "C" or below. Some graduate programs will allow a couple of C grades, and then a remediation plan is usually put in place. Most graduate programs will not accept anything lower than a "C."


The courses to pay particular attention to are those listed as practicum or intern, as these are the classes that represent the assimilation of everything learned in the graduate program. Anything lower than a grade of "B" would be a red flag for the interviewer. If the intern cannot achieve at least a "B", the supervisor should realize that there are major content or interpersonal gaps. Many universities will not allow grades of "C" in these classes, and a student would have to retake the practicum/intern classes.

Questions from the transcript:

1. What classes they liked and why?
2. What classes they disliked and why?
3. How were the practicum classes organized?
4. How did they learn the basic skills?
5. Were there any difficulties with acquiring the basic skills?

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Interview Questions pg 2

6. What types of clinical issues did they work on during the practicum classes?
7. With which issues did they experience success?
8. With which issues did they have problems?
9. What types of clients did they have? Demographic, age, culture, etc?
10. What theory or theories did they try when working with clients?
11. What is their preferred theory?
12. What types of ethical issues did they encounter?
13. How were the ethical issues resolved or were they not resolved?
14. What kinds of value clashes did they encounter?
15. How were the values clashes resolved or were they not resolved?
16. What was their supervision like?
17. How many supervisors did they have?
18. Were the supervisors' styles similar or different?
19. Which supervision style did they prefer?
20. How was feedback given to them?
21. Did they receive feedback from peers as well as from supervisors?

The References

The supervisor may choose or call any references provided by the intern. If the intern has been a good graduate student and intern at a field site, most respondents will state this. If the intern has been less than favorable, the respondent may not share much information. This type of response may be difficult to understand, as some respondents are very cautious about what is said in a reference call or they may have serious reservations about the intern.

One question that can be effective is: "If someone asked you for a referral to a counselor, would you mention this person?"

Information the Supervisor Should Share During the Interview

1. Your counseling theory
2. Your experience /specialties in the counseling area
3. Your experience in supervision
4. Your expectations of a supervisee
5. Your expectations of the supervision process
6. How you will conduct supervision
7. Your fees for supervision



Release of Info for Employer

RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO SPEAK WITH FORMER LPC/LMFT SUPERVISORS, SITE SUPERVISORS, and EMPLOYERS

I, _____
PROSPECTIVE SUPERVISEE/CURRENT SUPERVISEE NAME

give my consent to _____
PROSPECTIVE /CURRENT LPC/LMFT SUPERVISOR NAME

to request or provide information regarding myself which may be helpful in the supervision process of my licensure hours. I understand the following:

- This consent may apply to written or oral communication.
- My Prospective/Current Supervisor may be discussing my counseling skills and abilities and professionalism with my previous LPC/LMFT supervisor(s), site supervisor(s), employer(s), at the named organization(s) listed below.
- In the case of a Current LPC/LMFT Supervisor, the information gathered may be used as grounds to terminate our supervisory relationship.
- In the case of a Prospective LPC/LMFT Supervisor, the information gathered may be used as grounds to decline to enter a supervisory relationship.

Please list ALL sites where supervised experience was accrued. For additional sites please use another sheet of paper and attach.

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMPLOYER _____

SITE SUPERVISOR _____

LPC/LMFT SUPERVISOR _____

LPC/LMFT SUPERVISOR _____

I understand the terms of this release and attest that I have made a complete list of former sites and supervisors. This consent will expire at the completion of the Supervisee's hours for licensure.

PROSPECTIVE/CURRENT SUPERVISEE SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PROSPECTIVE/CURRENT LPC/LMFT SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

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REMEDIATION

▶ COMMON ISSUES

1. rushing and not stopping to think about the clinical situation
2. using technology inappropriately
3. making statements to clients that are not accurate
4. breaching confidentiality
5. use of titles



REMEDIATION

DOCUMENTING WHAT YOU HAVE DONE



Remediation contract

Remediation Plan for Supervisee		
Date		
Supervisee		
Issue		
Initial Remediation		
Activity	Assigned Completion Date	Completed?
1		
2		
3		
4		
Additional Remediation/Follow Up Plan (if Supervisee does not complete Initial Remediation)		
Supervisee Agreement		
I understand I must complete the Initial and Additional Remediation/Follow Up Plan set forth by my supervisor and my failure to do so will be grounds for termination of the supervisory relationship, possible termination of my contract employment, and notification of the appropriate licensing board of my activities.		
Supervisee Signature and Date		
Supervisor Signature and Date		

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REMEDICATION

▶ METHODS OF REMEDIATION

- ▶ Readings
- ▶ Research
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Taking a break
- ▶ Examining goals



TERMINATION

▶ REMEDIATION TO TERMINATION

1. As the supervisor, how much time do we give for remediation to be effective?
2. As the supervisor, how many chances do we give?
3. What is our toleration limit? Would other supervisors have more tolerance or less?
4. How much of ourselves do we continue to invest?
5. Do we or do we not sign off on hours?



TERMINATION

▶ ISSUES CAUSING IMMEDIATE TERMINATION

(supervision class)

1. refused to do homework
2. having sex with a client
3. blatant violation of the code
4. sexual harassment statement
5. criminal conviction
6. not complying with paperwork
7. no malpractice insurance



Final Thoughts

Resistance will happen in Supervision and the supervisor needs to know how to deal with it



Resources Used

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