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Practical Guidance for Supervisors of School Psychologists

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Purpose : provide information and teach skills specific to the supervisory process in school psychology

Intended Outcomes:

– Gain knowledge of best practices and various approaches to supervision

– Identify supervisory behaviors that define competent supervision practices

– Gain experience applying process supervision to sample cases

– Gain exposure to formats for documenting formal observations and evaluation tools

Definitions of Supervision

- One-on-one efforts to help improve the professional skills of the supervisee

- Separate from the administrative tasks of supervisors such as record-keeping and school policies

Fischetti & Crespi, 1999

Definitions of Supervision

- An interpersonal interaction between 2 or more individuals for the purpose of sharing knowledge, assessing professional competencies, and providing objective feedback with the terminal goals of developing new competencies, facilitating effective delivery of psychological services, and maintaining professional competencies

McIntosh & Phelps, 2000

NASP's Definition

- *"… an ongoing, positive, systematic, collaborative process between a school psychologist and school psychology supervisor that focuses on promoting professional growth and exemplary professional practice leading to improved performance of all concerned - school psychologist, supervisor, students, and the entire school community"*

National Association of School Psychologists' Supervision Work Group (1998)

Administrative Supervision

- focuses on the functioning of the service unit

- includes personnel issues, logistics of service delivery, and legal, contractual and organizational practices

- addresses the performance of job duties in accordance with conditions of employment and assigned responsibilities

Administrative Supervision (continued)

- primarily concerned with outcomes and consumer satisfaction rather than discipline-specific professional skills

- administrative supervision may be carried out by individuals trained and credentialed in school administration and not school psychology

Professional Supervision

- refers to oversight of the specific professional practices of personnel within one's own profession

- requires specific training and knowledge in the area of supervision

- professional supervisors support practices consistent with professional standards, promote ongoing professional development to improve and update skills, and insure systems of personnel evaluation consistent with specific professional standards.

Professional Supervision (continued)

- Professional supervisors must collaborate with administrative supervisors to assure appropriate and ongoing evaluation of models of service delivery

- Professional supervision is only provided by a licensed/certified school psychologist or by an individual holding an equivalent title (e.g., school psychological service provider, school psychology specialist).

Supervision vs. Consultation

- Consultation is collaborative and voluntary
- In consultation, the consultee always has the right to reject recommendations
- In consultation, the consultee always maintains primary responsibility of the client. In supervision, the supervisee maintains primary (or at least shared) responsibility of the client.

Professional Standards

- APA and NASP have both published standards for school psychology supervision practices

- Surveys from the field, however, indicate that supervisors are not provided training specific to supervision

APA, 1981; NASP, 2004; Zins, Murphy, & Wess, 1989

NASP Position Statement on Supervision

- Qualification of Supervisors
  - Supervisors of SPSYs and supervisors of trainees should hold the NCSP credential or the SPSY credential for the state, and have at least three years' experience as a school psychologist
  - Training and/or experience in the supervision of school personnel are desirable

NASP Position Statement on Supervision (continued)

- Frequency of Supervision
  - Interns and first-year SPSYs should receive at least 2 hours per week
  - Supervision and/or peer review should be available after the first year of employment to assure ongoing professional development and support

NASP Position Statement on Supervision (continued)

- Evaluation
  - Supervisors of school psychologists should ensure that the evaluation of service units and individual practitioners is both summative and formative, and based upon specific, measurable objectives.

Background Information

- There is very little research on supervision specific to the field of school psychology.

- 55% of school psychologists reported receiving formal supervision (Chafouleas et al, 2002)

- Nearly 90% of surveyed supervisors lacked appropriate training in the practice of supervision (NASP, 2002)

Background Information

- When supervision does occur, many supervisors lack the skills to provide quality supervision.

Background Information

- APA & NASP
  - Recommend regular and frequent supervision of all S PSYs
  - Supervision comes in various forms but should be matched to individual's specific needs
  - Provided by supervisors with training in the specific practice of supervision of S PSYs

Background Information

- Ethical Code (APA & NASP)
  - Ensure supervision does not constitute a dual role
  - Supervisors should practice within their own realm of competence
  - Ensure supervisees uphold the ethical standards of the profession

Background Information

- Legally
  - Liability issues exist
  - Supervisor has a duty to ensure appropriate standards of care

Harrar et al, 1990

Models of Supervision

Psychodynamic Model (Freud)

Goals: Supervisees learn to use themselves effectively in helping relationships.

How: Use supervisory relationship dynamics to monitor constructive or destructive ways of reacting to others. A teaching and learning process emphasizing relationships between and among patient, therapist, and supervisor.

Models of Supervision

Client-Centered/Person-Centered (Rogers)

Goals: Establish conditions in the supervisory relationship that mirror those necessary for effective psychotherapy.

How: Help supervisee grow in confidence, understanding of self, and understanding of therapeutic process.

Models of Supervision

Cognitive Behavioral Supervision

Goals: To teach appropriate skills and extinguish inappropriate behavior

How: Apply principles of learning theory

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Models of Supervision

Models Grounded in Psychotherapy Theory	Developmental Models	Social Role Models
Psychodynamic	(IDM) Integrated Development Model	Discrimination model (Bernard)
Person-centered	Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth	Hawkins and Shohet
Cognitive behavioral	Skovholt and Ronnestad	SAS Model (Holloway)
Systemic		
Constructivist		

Bernard & Goodyear, 1998

IDM Model

- Eight specific domains of professional development

Intervention skills

Assessment techniques

Interpersonal assessment

Client conceptualization

Individual differences

Theoretical orientation

Treatment plans/goals

Professional ethics

IDM Model

- Three overarching structures that differ quantitatively and qualitatively within the 8 domains
  - Self and other awareness
  - Motivation
  - Autonomy

IDM

- Level-1 Supervisee
  - Exhibits high anxiety
  - Exhibits high motivation
  - Is dependent on the supervisor
  - Focuses predominantly on the self, particularly on performance of technique or following guideline
  - Is fearful of evaluation

IDM

- Supervisor of Level-1 Supervisee
  - Be supportive and prescriptive
  - Provide structure and positive feedback
  - Use minimal direct confrontation
  - Have the supervisee work with only mildly distressed clients
  - Institute observation and role-play

IDM

- Supervisor of Level-I Supervisee (contd)
  - Should put theory on the back burner to emphasize and encourage conceptualization, skill acquisition and development, self-monitoring of skill development, and attention to the client response to therapeutic intervention
  - Level-2 supervisees can be excellent Level-1 supervisors

Methods to Foster Transition from Level 1 to Level 2

- Encourage increased autonomy
- Begin reduction in structure
- Encourage new techniques rather than familiar ones only
- Foster focus on the client and his or her reactions and process

Characteristics valued by Supervisees

Empathy   Investment

Congruence   Curiosity

Genuineness   Openness

Flexibility   Concreteness

Availability   Self-disclosure

Attention   Supportive

Carifio & Hess, 1987; Conoley & Bahns, 1995

Effective Supervisory Behaviors

- Set specific, explicit, and measurable goals

- Provide feedback that is

  - timely

  - clearly understood

  - reciprocal

Carifo & Hess, 1987

Effective Supervisory Techniques

- Brainstorming
- Role-play
- Modeling
- Guided reflection

The Cycle of Clinical Supervision

- Primary emphasis: professional development

- Primary goal: to help the school psychologist improve his/her practice

- Major Activities:
  - Planning Conference
  - Observation
  - Feedback Conference

Cycle of Clinical Supervision

Five Stages of Clinical Supervision

- STAGE ONE: Pre-Observation Conference

  – School Psychologist's Task: To mentally rehearse and orally describe the planned activity, including the purpose and the content.

  – Supervisor's Task: To learn about and understand what the school psychologist has in mind for the activity by asking probing and clarifying questions.

  – Questions to Consider: What types of data will be recorded? How will it be recorded?

Five Stages of Clinical Supervision

- STAGE TWO: Observation

  – School Psychologist's Task: To conduct the planned activity as well as possible.

  – Supervisor's Task: To record events occurring during the activity as accurately as possible.

Five Stages of Clinical Supervision

- ## STAGE THREE: Data Analysis & Strategy

  – School Psychologist's Task: To help interpret the data.

  – Supervisor's Task: To make sense of the raw data and develop a plan for the post-observation conference.

  – Questions to Consider: Are there any patterns in the data? Are there any critical incidents or turning points? What strengths were evident? Were any techniques especially successful? Are there any concerns? Which patterns, events, and concerns are most important to address? How will the conference begin and end?

Five Stages of Clinical Supervision

- ## STAGE FOUR: Post-Observation Conference

  – School Psychologist's Task: To critically examine his/her own performance with an open mind.

  – Supervisor's Task: To help clarify and build upon the psychologist's understanding of the behaviors and events that occurred during the activity, and to provide feedback and guidance to improve performance.

  – Questions to Consider: What patterns and critical incidents are evident? Were any unanticipated or unintended outcomes evident? What will the psychologist do differently the next time?

Five Stages of Clinical Supervision

- ## STAGE FIVE: Post-Conference Analysis

  – School Psychologist's Task: To provide honest feedback to the supervisor about how well the clinical supervision cycle went.

  – Supervisor's Task: To critically examine his or her own performance during the cycle.

  – Questions to Consider: How well did the cycle go? What worked well? What did not work well? If you could do it again, what would you differently? What will you do differently during the next clinical supervision cycle?

Role-played **Supervisory** Cycle

- Pre-observation Conference
  - Understand what the school psychologist has in mind for the activity.
  - What types of data will be recorded?
- Post-observation Conference
  - Provide feedback to improve performance.
  - What patterns are evident?
  - Were any unanticipated outcomes evident?
  - What will the school psychologist do differently next time?

Strategy: Provide verbal feedback

- Begin feedback session with detailed discussion of strengths;

- Address weakness simply, clearly, and explicitly;

- Emphasize behavior, performance and activities;

- Provide specific examples of areas in need a change;

- Encourage supervisee to express feelings;

- Provide honest, straightforward, yet kind reactions;

- Brainstorm solutions with supervisee; and

- At end of feedback session restate expectations and a clear action plan.

Strategy: Provide written feedback

- Use "official" forms when available;

- Create a paper trail;

- Make sure conform to legal and ethical standards;

- Site specific instances of problems and attempts to resolve them, past and present;

- Describe behaviors, looking back at SMART goals;

- Depersonalize messages rather than evaluate the person; and

- Develop a written action plan.

Vignette 1: Formal Observation

Throughout the lesson, each individual directive was coded with a /. If the student complied, the slash was crossed to form an X. If another individual directive was needed, another / would be recorded. Below are the results for the first, second, and third groups:

- **Group #1**
- A (female):
- C (male): X (delayed)
- S (male): /X

Group #2
M (female): XX//X
C (male): X///XX/X

D (male): X/XXXX/XX
L (female): //X

Group #3
J (male): XXX/X
R (female): X

S (female):
S (female): //X

- What feedback would you give the supervisee?

- What goals would you establish for the supervisee regarding future performance?

Vignette 1: (continued)

- In looking at the chart, several observations can be made. For example, the smallest group required the least redirection. The 5 male students accounted for 25 redirectives for an average of 5 redirections per male. The 6 female students accounted for 12 redirectives for an average of 2 redirectives per female. The most redirectives were used in the largest group (4 members) with the greater proportion of males (50%) between the two 4-member groups.

Vignette 1: (continued)

- See sample formal observation write-up:
  - Description of Activity Observed
  - Observations
  - Areas of Strength
  - Suggestions for Improvement
  - Comments/Concerns from Student and/or Field Supervisor

Vignette 2: Ms. Kotter

- Ms. Kotter is a veritable institutional mascot and is much beloved by all.

- After working as a Guidance Counselor for many years, she took enough courses to be "certified to give the WISC."

- She now works as a School Psychologist. Her skills (never really well-developed) are now lagging further and further behind; the disparity between her skills and those of the other school psychologists in the district is enormous.

- Because Ms. Kotter has no background in statistics, progress monitoring and benchmarking are conceptually very confusing to her. Despite your best efforts – and her willingness to try – little progress has been made in terms of bringing her skills up-to-date.

- She is in her late sixties and has no thought of retiring. She proudly states, "You'll just have to carry me out feet-first someday!"

- How do you provide effective supervision for someone who has inadequate professional training?

- Where do you begin?

- How do you provide general oversight?

- How do you provide specific feedback?

- How might you assure that no harm is done?

- Should you selectively assign "low-level" cases to Ms. Kotter?

- Do you reduce caseload? Do you reduce responsibilities?

- How do you monitor progress and professional growth?

- How do you assure skill development when previous efforts have been unsuccessful?

- What feedback would you give Ms. Kotter?

- What goals would you establish for Ms. Kotter regarding future performance?

Employing steps of conflict resolution

- Determine and resolve conflicts regarding supervisory methods or goals relating to practice, supervision, context;

- Identify the disputants and specify the areas of conflict;

- Brainstorm possible solutions without commentary; and

- Designate possible solutions as minor (taking less than a month with available resources), moderate (under the control of the group, possible with available resources, and taking up to six months), or major (involving individuals not in the group, requiring additional resources, and/or taking more than a year) challenges;

- Target one moderate goal per quarter, obtain help with major goals, and determine appropriate minor goals;

- Plan and implement action plans with staff;

- Evaluate the results; and

- Repeat the process on an ongoing basis.

Dealing with impaired personnel

Target the concern by identifying specific problem behaviors using objective and observable evidence that keep a supervisee from meeting job expectations.

Determine the negative impact of the behavior on service delivery.

Identify ethical or legal repercussions and consult with administrators, legal counsel, HR, and university.

Meet with the supervisee to provide feedback and to ensure the supervisee understands due process rights.

Status of Supervisee and Suggested Goals

- Practicum

  - Goals: benefit from advanced experiences and continued education

  - Supervisor: university faculty (primary) and field (secondary)

Status of Supervisee and Suggested Goals

- Internship
  - Goals: refine skills to become relatively independent and confident upon completion
  - Supervisor: shared equally with university faculty and field

Provide necessary training, allow time for the supervisee to change, and document the results.

Determine whether the supervisee cannot address the problem, the behavior does not improve with training or feedback, service is adversely affected, the behavior leads to ethical or legal violations, the behavior reflects seriously and negatively on the organization.

Determine, implement, and document actions.

If dismissal necessary, find a way for the supervisee to leave quietly and gracefully: address the repercussions of the impaired supervisee's *actions* with administrators, teachers, and clients; address the repercussions of the *dismissal* with administrators, teachers, and clients

Vignette 3: Mr. Doe (see eval.)

Mr. Doe performed in an exemplary manner for the entire first year and most of the second year. Initially his knowledge was current and his enthusiasm impressive. More recently, many complaints and concerns have emerged. These include (a) utilization of the same test battery for all students, (b) a failure to institute data-based decision making procedures after extensive district-level training, (c) frequent tardiness, (d) failure to keep appointments with teachers and administrators, and (e) pervasively variable performance (see attached memos from building principals).

Mr. Doe has completed many evaluations (over 80) this year. He has only administered WISC-IVs and no classroom observations occur.

During Mr. Doe's employment there appears to have been a decline in performance. Professional growth has been stagnant. Of most concern is his tendency to continue to test generously and provide computer-generated reports without recommendations. He also displays increasing moodiness and withdrawal. Multiple administrators and staff members have conveyed specific and serious concerns.

It appears that specific skill deficits are not the problem but that the lack of application of skills is the concern. Also, there are some concerns about labile performance and personal presentation. Hence, referral to the EAP may be considered.

- What feedback would you give the supervisee?

- What goals would you establish for the supervisee regarding future performance?

Status of Supervisee and Suggested Goals

- Entry Level – first 3-5 years post-internship

  - Goals: supervision of case-specific issues; integration into and understanding of school psychological service

  - Supervisors: External supervisor or peer supervisor or administrative supervisor

Status of Supervisee and Suggested Goals

- ## Independent Practice

  - Goals: increase sophistication of skills; continuing education

  - Supervisors: External supervisor or peer supervisor or administrative supervisor

Status of Supervisee and Suggested Goals

- Supervisor
  - Goals: begin to supervise others
  - Supervisor: metasupervision – supervisor of greater experience

Knoff, 1986

Practical Guidelines

- Keep a theoretical orientation or specific model of supervision in mind to guide your supervisory activities

- Establish a relationship with the supervisee wherein he/she can express concerns and be open to constructive criticism

- Set measurable goals

Practical Guidelines

- Focus on specific skill building
- Provide frequent and specific feedback that is directly related to the stated goals
- Help supervisees examine their own thoughts and values and how they impact upon their performance

Examples

- Examples of measurable goals
  - Administer and score the WIAT-III without error
  - Conduct a functional behavioral assessment that allows the emotional support teacher to develop an individualized behavior support plan for the student without the need to collect additional assessment data

Examples

- Examples of measurable goals
  - Present results at the MDT using objective terms ("Average" or "Borderline" versus "pretty good" and "not so good")
  - Lead the data team meeting such that time limits for each activity are adhered to, off-topic discussion is effectively redirected, and each item on the agenda is addressed

Examples of Skill Building Activities

- Provide protocols for practice scoring

- Role-play steps involved in an initial consultation interview

- Guide case conceptualization by identifying hypotheses, reviewing definitional critieria, deciding on specific assessment procedures, etc.

Examples of Specific Feedback

- Sample write-ups of formal observations
  - Test administration
  - Confidentiality
  - Presentation of results
  - RtII Tier II Implementation
  - Consultation
  - Class Presentation

Evaluation Tools

- Consider developing a form unique to school psychologists
- Do not use teacher evaluation forms due to limited applicability

Evaluation Forms Should Reflect

- Assessment

- Consultation

- Recommendations for staff and parents

- Counseling

- Follow-up

- Professional development

Evaluation Forms (continued)

- Community relations
- Research
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Time Management

Evaluation Forms (continued)

- Reliability
- Ethics

Note: A specialist should evaluate first 8 competencies while a school administrator could evaluate remaining items.

QUESTIONS?

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