

Supervision

Common Phases and Themes

SUNY Oswego
Mental Health Counseling Program
Clinical Supervisor Training
Module 1

Six Phases of Supervision (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1995)

- **Phase 1:** The Lay Helper Phase - Experience helping others before they enter professional training.
- **Phase 2:** The Beginning Student Phase - Beginning student knows that the lay conceptions and ways of helping are no longer appropriate or valid.
- **Phase 3:** The Advanced Student Phase - Towards the end of training, the student is in internship and is receiving regular and formalized supervision. They are expected to function at a basic professional level.

Six Phases of Supervision (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1995)

- **Phase 4:** The Novice Professional Phase - First years after graduation are experienced as intense and engaging. Challenges to master and choices to be made.
- **Phase 5:** The Experienced Professional Phase - Counselor has been practicing for a number of years with a wide variety of clients. Creating a counseling role that is highly congruent with the individuals' values, interests, attitudes to increase authenticity.
- **Phase 6:** The Senior Professional Phase - Counselor is a well-established professional who has practiced for 20 to 25 years+. Serves as a guide for novices in the field.

Reflection Question

- What supervision phase do you fall into?
- What was your journey throughout the phases like?

The Nine Functions of Supervision

Contextual-Functional Meta-Framework (Chang, 2013)

1. Clinical Educator

- Teaches concepts and theories through didactic instruction, learning experiences, or assign readings

2. Skill Development Coach

- Supervisor demonstrates and/or gives feedback on skills, strategies, and interventions

3. Ethics/Risk Management Consultant

- Application of ethical principles in practice by developing the supervisee's ethical decision-making

The Nine Functions of Supervision

Contextual-Functional Meta-Framework (Chang, 2013)

4. Catalyst

- Finding “blind spots,” deficiencies, and personal issues that interfere with clinical work

5. Professional Gatekeeper

- Monitors and evaluates supervisees entering the profession on behalf of educational programs and/or regulatory boards.

6. Organizational/Administrative Supervisor

- Connects organizational procedures with ethical and legal mandates as well as time and workflow management.

The Nine Functions of Supervision

SupervisionContextual-Functional Meta-Framework (Chang, 2013)

7. Personal Supporter

- Working alliance with supervisee

8. Professional Mentor

- Provides advice, support, and feedback about professional issues and career choices

9. Advocate/System Change Agent

- Advocates for policies, organizational structures, and clinical practices, to improve the context of clinical service delivery

Reflection Questions

- Which functions of supervision do you feel the most comfortable with?
- Which functions of supervision challenge you?
- Which functions of supervision do you spend the most time with?

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 1: Professional Development Involves an Increasing Higher Order Integration of the Professional Self and the Personal Self –**

Consistency between a counselor's personality and counseling behaviors increase over time. Eventually the counselor freely and naturally applies the self appropriately in their counseling practice.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 2. The Focus of Functioning Shifts Dramatically Over Time.** - Pretraining:

The conventional mode: Includes defining the problem quickly, providing strong emotional support, providing sympathy as contrasted to empathy, and giving advice based on own experience.

Training: The external and rigid mode: Theoretical knowledge and empirically-based methods and techniques become the focus of attention. In counseling sessions they become less natural, loose and more rigid.

Post-training/experienced: The internal and flexible mode: After graduation and with professional experience, there is more assured, confident and flexible professional functioning.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 3. Continuous Reflection Is a Prerequisite for Optimal Learning and Professional Development at All Levels of Experience**

Reflection is a continuous, focused search for a more comprehensive, nuanced, and in-depth understanding of self and others, and of the processes and phenomena that the practitioner meets in their counseling sessions.

- **Theme 4. An Intense Commitment to Learn Propels the Developmental Process**

Commitment to learn and to take ethically appropriate risks to increase professional functioning.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 5. The Cognitive Map Changes: Beginning Practitioners Rely on External Expertise, Seasoned Practitioners Rely on Internal Expertise**

A shift toward self-directed learning occurs with experience.

- **Theme 6. Professional Development Is a Long, Slow, Continuous Process That Can Also Be Erratic**

Continual increases in a sense of competence and mastery over time.

- **Theme 7. Professional Development Is a Life-Long Process**

Most models of development within the counseling profession are in fact models of student development.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 8. Many Beginning Practitioners Experience Much Anxiety in Their Professional Work. Over Time, Anxiety Is Mastered by Most**

Expecting high performance levels, idealistic expectations, academia's focus on achievement, fear of incompatibility as a counselor, and a lack of professional knowledge and competence combine to create anxiety for many beginning counselors.

- **Theme 9. Clients Serve as a Major Source of Influence and Serve as Primary Teachers**

Clients are a powerful source of learning and development that brings depth and intensity to the theoretical knowledge obtained during counselor education.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 10. Personal Life Influences Professional Functioning and Development Throughout the Professional Life Span**

For counselors at all developmental levels, experiences in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood impacted professional functioning and development.

- **Theme 11. Interpersonal Sources of Influence Propel Professional Development More Than 'Impersonal' Sources of Influence**

People (including clients, professional elders, professional peers, friends, and family members) serve as catalysts for growth. Clients were ranked as most impactful, supervision second, personal therapy third and personal life fourth.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 12. New Members of the Field View Professional Elders and Graduate Training with Strong Affective Reactions**

Continually scrutinizing and evaluating professors, teachers and supervisors to either idealize or devalue them. Want to learn from and model seniors they see as competent, intellectually brilliant, having strong therapeutic skills, having outstanding supervision ability, emotionally supporting beginners, and modeling professional values in personal life. Negative reactions are just as common and just as intense as positive reactions.

Themes of Supervision

(Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003)

- **Theme 13. Extensive Experience with Suffering Contributes to Heightened Recognition, Acceptance and Appreciation of Human Variability**

Age brings wisdom including an appreciation for uncertainties and inconsistency. Insight, introspection and reflection contribute to the development of wisdom.

- **Theme 14. For the Practitioner There Is a Realignment from Self as Hero to Client as Hero**

Increased experience with failures and success over the years contribute to a gradual shift from counselor power to client power.

Common Themes in Supervision Textbooks

- Establishing a Working Alliance With the Supervisee
- Managing Parallel Processes
- Remediating Skill Difficulties and Deficits
- Heightening Multicultural Awareness
- Negotiating Role Conflicts
- Working Through Countertransference
- Managing Sexual Attraction
- Resolving Gender-Related Misunderstandings
- Raising Self-Awareness in Emotions, Attitudes, and Behaviors
- Working Through Shame for the Client and Supervisee
- Managing Gatekeeping Issues

Common Themes in Supervision Textbooks

- Learning Supervision Models
- Individual, Triadic, and Group Supervision Processes
- Supervising Assessment Practices
- Evaluating Counseling Outcomes
- Managing Ethical Dilemmas
- Evaluating Supervisee Case Notes and Reports
- Managing Crisis Situations
- Dealing with Ethical and Legal Issues
- Using Technology in Counseling and Supervision
- Handling Social Media in Counseling and Supervision

Reflection Questions

- Identify the themes that are most common in your work as a supervisor.
- What themes in supervision have been the most challenging for you?
- How have you addressed this?

End of Module 1