Culturally Competent Supervision

The Supervisory Relationship
The WAYS Paradigm
Cultural Competence
Let’s review...
The Supervisory Relationship

- Positive Rapport / Working Alliance / Trust & Safety
- Mentor & Role Model / Interest in Learning and Development / Give permission to acknowledge mistakes
- Assist Development of Professional Identity / Encourage Independence
- Culturally Sensitive
- Therapeutic Interventions
- Pacing and Leading – beginning, middle, & end to supervision / dealing with supervisee anxiety
The WAYS Paradigm

Counseling theory and practice organized around three principles:

1. **A Way of Being** – a counselor’s presence with a client

2. **A Way of Understanding** – a way of conceptualizing and understanding the various dimensions of the client

3. **A Way of Intervening** – how the counselor structures the process of change (treatment plans, goals, interventions)
A student counselor was seeing a female client who had been diagnosed with recurrent major depression. The student had been taught that the standard treatment for depression was a combination of appropriate medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy. The student referred the client to a psychiatrist for medication evaluation, and the client was placed on an antidepressant. The student then read additional materials about Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy and began using its principles. He had expertly defined the client's cognitive distortions and negative self-messages and began working with these concepts with her. The REBT teaching/mentoring way of being was apparent in his session tapes. However, within a few sessions the client began to act out with the student by arriving late, skipping appointments, and sitting quietly with her arms folded during the session. The student was baffled by the behavior because, he reasoned, he was intervening in the appropriate, standard treatment manner. After he learned the three ways, he was able to look at his way of being as being congruent with REBT but possibly incongruent with what the client needed. After he reviewed different ways of being from several theories, he selected person-centered theory (Rogers, 1980) because the concepts of unconditional positive regard and genuineness matched the client's expressed need for support during her depression. Within two sessions, the client was sharing openly and exploring distortions in her thinking. Thus, the student was able to combine theories while still working within a cohesive paradigm. He was able to shift his way of being with the client while still using REBT's ways of understanding and intervening.
A Way of Being
The Therapeutic Relationship

- How would you describe your approach to a way of being?
  - Psychodynamic?
  - Humanistic/Experiential?
  - Cognitive Behaviorist?
  - Family Systems?

- **Parallel Process and Isomorphism**

- How might supervisors need to adapt their way of being to meet supervisee needs?
A Way of Understanding Biopsychosocial /Case Formulation

How can we assist supervisees in conceptualizing clients in the following areas?

- Personality theory and structure, normal and abnormal human development, and different ways people change.
- Understanding levels of the unconscious and conscious, human behavior, and formation of belief systems.
- How individuals assimilate culture, think about themselves, interact with others, introject family values, develop symptoms of psychopathology, emote, and behave.
- Knowledge of clients' strengths, resources, and existing skills.
How might we help them develop Treatment Plans and appropriate Interventions?

- How change occurs and what techniques will enhance a client's movement toward the goal of increased mental health.
- How the counselor interrupts the client's cycle of dysfunction and allows for the processing of healthier alternatives of thinking, feeling, and behaving.
- How to develop a treatment plan with the client outlining the desired goals.
- How to draw from knowledge of and relationship with the client to challenge, interpret, reflect, and support the client toward the therapeutic goals.
- How to structure the change process and use counseling knowledge to implement steps toward the goal.
- How the counseling process becomes one of practicing, reviewing, repeating, and affirming the desired changes.
- How to select interventions such as reframing feelings, changing attitudes, altering belief systems, gaining insight, grieving, or staying with painful feelings in the presence of another supportive person.
The Supervisory Relationship
Parallel Process and Isomorphism

- “We do unto others what has been done to us”
- “More is caught than taught”
- Parallel Process – parallels between the supervisory and counseling relationships
- Isomorphism – metatransference; the parallel structures between therapy and supervision; focus on interactional process
Isomorphism

- Supervision is the isomorph of therapy
- Interpersonal systems including boundaries, hierarchies, and subsystems with distinct characteristics
- Same rules apply to both
- Consistency down the hierarchy - match content and process to communicate the same message throughout the interconnected systems

Back
Implications for Clinical Training

- Can be helpful in giving feedback
- Supervisors can point out strengths and deficits
  - Student may be strong in understanding and intervening, but puzzled by why a counseling relationship is not successful – supervisor can point out that the way of being may need to be examined and changed
  - Student may have excellent rapport (way of being) and struggle with understanding client issues, thus may need remedial work in psychopathology or human development
- Can more easily sculpt a plan to remedy the problem
Diversity Factors

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Culture
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Age

- SES
- Religion & spirituality
- Disability or Ableness
- Urban vs. rural/remote
- Body size
- Other factors including worldview

Are these important to discuss in counseling?

In Supervision?
Diversity in Supervision

- Low rates of actual discussion of ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation in supervision
- Lack of initiation of these by supervisors
- Supervisors did not view exposure to cultural differences as influential in supervisee’s development while supervisees do
- Both white and supervisees of color found supervisors sometimes unresponsive to cultural issue
- Many topics simply do not come up i.e., religion
Opportunities

- Supervisors can infuse and model multiculturalism in supervision.
- Attending to cultural dynamics—and individual racial, ethnic, spiritual, sexual orientation, and gender identity enhances awareness of racial-cultural dynamics in vivo.
- Enhances relationship and client outcomes.
- Attention to multicultural phenomena associated with stronger supervisory alliance.
- When multicultural dynamics are introduced it is associated with an increases in personal awareness of culture.
- Creation of culturally sensitive ambiance and climate.
Discussion

- How does this fit with your experiences?

- How might these ideas enhance your supervision with students?