

Counselling Supervision

Lecture 1

Introduction to Counselling Supervision

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Introduction to counselling supervision

Lecture One Outline

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1.1 Introduction

In this lecture, we will explore the meaning of counselling supervision, we will differentiate between counselling and counsellor supervision. We will identify the purpose and goals of counselling supervision. We will discuss the importance and principles of counselling supervision.

1.2 Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- a) Describe the various definitions of counselling supervision.
- b) Discuss the importance of counselling supervision.
- c) Apply the principles of counselling supervision.

1.3 What is counselling supervision?

It is difficult to define counselling supervision because of the various connotations that the word supervision portrays. Some authors have used the following words for supervision:

“To oversee” indicates authority as observed in line management (Carroll, 2012).

“Super”- vision according to (Houston, 1990) it denotes to oversee.

“Extra”- vision which means identifying mistakes, thus present them to supervision for correction. Therefore, this will be part of verification in the supervision process.

Carroll (2012) refers to supervision as “consultancy support” and does away with the word supervision.

What is Counselling?

Counselling is a dynamic process of a relationship between a counsellor and a client. The counsellor facilitates the client towards growth into a fully functioning individual.

Counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationships, which develop self-knowledge, emotional acceptance, growth and personal resources. The overall aim is to help a client live a fully functioning, resourceful and satisfactory life.

Counselling may be concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crises, working through feelings and inner conflict or improving relationships with others. The counsellor’s role is to facilitate the client’s work in ways that respect the client’s values, personal resources and capacity for self-determination.

Definition(s) of counsellor supervision and related terms

Certain definitions have attempted to bring across the meaning of counselling supervision. Counselling supervision is;

An alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee. The supervisee is able to reflect on client work.

“Supervision provides an opportunity for the student to capture the essence of the psychotherapeutic process as it is articulated and modelled by the supervisor and to recreate it in the counselling relationship”.

Supervision is a forum where counsellors reflect on their client work; learn from this interaction with an experienced counsellor who plays the role of the supervisor.

BACP, (2012) has given a more comprehensive definition, a definition that seems to capture most of the other definitions above, “counselling supervision is a formal, mutually agreed agreement for counsellors to discuss their work regularly with someone who is normally an experienced and competent counsellor and familiar with the process of counsellor supervision. The task is to work together to ensure and develop the efficacy of the supervision in counselling practice” (BACP, 2012).

BACP lays emphasis in the competency of the counsellor and the client welfare during the process of counselling.

Alonso, (2000) defines counsellor supervision as a ‘complicated hall of mirrors’. She explains this through various levels of relationship from the client, client-counsellor relationship, counsellor, counsellor-supervisor relationship, counsellor-organizational relationship and supervisor-organizational relationship.

Counsellor supervision is further defined as working alliance between a supervisor and a counsellor in which the counsellor can offer an account or recording of his/her work, reflect on it and receive feedback and, where appropriate, guidance. The objective is to enable the counsellor to gain ethical competence, confidence and creativity so as to provide his/her clients with the best possible service.

It is a formal arrangement that enables counsellors to discuss their counselling regularly with one or more people who have an understanding of counselling and counselling supervision or consultative support (BACP, 2012). Supervisors support performance and quality of care by meeting the needs of service providers, which enables the providers to perform well and meet the needs of their clients.

Counselling supervision is an intense, interpersonally focused educational relationship that has its purpose developing the supervisee’s skills and identity through an examination of cases at an experiential and cognitive level Loganbill, Hardy & Delworth (1982).

Counselling supervision supports the delivery of optimum care by safeguarding standards and by developing professional expertise (Bishop, 1998).

Supervision is essential to caring for counselling staff, enhancing professional development and helping prevent burnout. Counsellor supervision is an activity of professional support and learning that empowers counsellors to develop knowledge and competence, maintain responsibility for their practices, enhance quality outcomes for clients and ensure the safety of staff and clients in complex counselling situations.

1.4 Differences between Counselling and Counsellor Supervision

Counselling	Counsellor Supervision
<p>Aim</p> <p>Enables clients to lead more satisfying lives</p> <p>Increases clients capacity to live resourcefully by developing their ability to reflect on their own experience</p>	<p>Aim</p> <p>Enables the fullest therapeutic use of counselling</p> <p>Helps counsellors develop their counselling skills and their ability to reflect on their use in the counselling process</p>
<p>Presentation</p> <p>Material presented verbally by clients (sometimes supported by records, photographs, etc.)</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Materials presented in various ways, verbal, written, audio/video tape or observed</p>
<p>Relationship (Counsellor)</p>	<p>Relationship (Supervisor)</p>

Relates to clients at emotional level Models effective self-management	Relates to counsellor at professional level Models effective role management
Expectations Client attends, tries to make use of the counselling and is not expected to prepare for the session Pace is determined by client's readiness to adopt a course of action	Expectations Counsellor attends, prepares for the session and provides the necessary input Pace is determined (usually by supervisor) by the need to reach some resolution before the next counselling session or the next work related encounter (if not a client specific issue)

1.5 Purposes of Supervision in counselling

As an ethical requirement: Supervision is a way of maintaining the accountability of counsellors to their clients. It ensures that we are working responsibly and to the best of our abilities. A supervisor, besides being responsible to the profession and the client is responsible for the agency and to counselling practice.

As a necessary resource: Supervision is a key professional requirement for practicing counsellors as a way of mitigating for their personal burnout, protecting the client and the profession.

Supervision is a requirement for all counsellors, no matter how experienced they are.

Counselling is highly personal and taxing in nature.

We may be working with people when they are at their most vulnerable, distressed and needy.

We may work with clients who leave us puzzled or confused. We may become hardened or burned out without realizing it, which will affect our work.

We may get out of date and need to be encouraged to continue our professional development.

We may become exploitative of our clients without realizing it.

Supervision provides an opportunity for counsellors to:

- Explore the way they work, stand back and get different perspectives on their clients and the way they work with them,
- Become more aware of the way they affect and are affected by their clients,
- Relieve emotions and recharge energies and ideals,
- Feel supported in their competence and confidence as professionals, and
- Receive feedback and challenge the quality of their practice, monitor and develop ethical decision-making.

Goals of Counselling Supervision

The goals of supervision are fourfold: (a) to promote supervisee growth and development, (b) to protect the welfare of the client, (c) to monitor supervisee performance and act as gatekeeper for the profession, and (d) to empower the supervisee to self-supervise and carry out these goals as an independent professional (Corey. G., Haynes. R., Moulton.P. & Muratori. M. 2010).

To Promote Supervisee Growth and Development

The primary goal of supervision is to teach supervisees to facilitate counselling sessions with clients. This is an essential component of the supervision function, as supervisors must ensure the welfare of both current and future clients of the supervisee. Supervisees must learn from supervision about issues that will translate well into independent practice in the future. The broader definition of this goal of supervision is promotion of supervisee growth and development as a competent counsellors and professional, which may involve teaching or assuming any number of other supervisory roles. Promoting supervisee development is clearly a major goal of supervision, but it should balance with the focus on the welfare of the client.

To Protect the Welfare of the Client

Supervision has the dual purposes of promoting personal and professional development and growth of the supervisee and protection of clients (Yontef, 1996). A major function of the supervisor is to do everything necessary to ensure that both current and future clients receive

competent and professional services from the supervisee and to intervene in whatever way is necessary when the client is not receiving such services.

To Monitor Supervisee Performance and act as Gatekeeper for the Profession

The training faculty should serve as gatekeepers for the counselling profession. This gatekeeping function involves monitoring and evaluating the supervisee's competence to become licensed in fields such as counseling, clinical psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, or psychology.

The gatekeeping function of the supervisor will vary depending on the setting in which supervision takes place and the level of education and training of the supervisee. For example, professionals who supervise in an undergraduate human services program may have fewer gatekeeping responsibilities than do supervisors working with post degree, pre-licensed supervisees in the process of accumulating supervised hours toward a licensure requirement. Licensing and professional standards outline the requirements for supervisors when overseeing the clinical work of supervisees. Campbell (2000, 2006) and Herlihy (2006) both discussed the need to evaluate the supervisee's professional and therapeutic competence and suitability for the profession. Supervision has a pivotal role in the evaluation of competence of the supervisee to practice within the profession.

To Empower the Supervisee to Self-Supervise and be Independent Professional

A key function of the supervisory relationship is to assist the supervisee in developing the ability to take over the supervisory function and self-supervise (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). Therefore, in addition to teaching the supervisee, protecting the client's welfare, and serving as gatekeeper for the profession, an essential goal is to assist the supervisee to develop the skills, awareness, and resources necessary for self-evaluation. This is accomplished by providing the opportunity for supervisees to learn problem-solving and decision-making skills and to practice self-evaluation and self-supervision. Morrissette (2001) concluded that self-supervision involves the process of self-discovery and self-exploration, which can be accomplished as professionals go about helping others. These practices in supervision help supervisees learn to trust their clinical judgment. Personal and professional development is certainly a desired outcome of the supervisee's

empowerment. Our conviction is that if supervisees become empowered personally and professionally, and if they are competent practitioners, they will place the client's welfare first and will not bring harm to clients. A competent professional will be able to monitor his or her own performance, be aware of the limits of his or her competence, be able to identify how personal issues affect professional practice, and know when and how to seek consultation and additional supervision to function as a self-supervisor.

Although the aforementioned goals are equally important, particular situations will determine which takes priority at any given moment. If a conflict exists between teaching the supervisee and protecting the welfare of the client, professional ethics codes require that protecting the welfare of the client be first. For example, when a supervisee reports that a client has expressed suicidal ideation, the goals of supervision quickly change from teaching the supervisee to a focus on the immediate need to protect the welfare of the client. It is essential to return to teaching the supervisee about suicide assessment and intervention once the needs of the client are met. It might help to think of the goals of supervision as occurring simultaneously rather than hierarchically. Effective supervision depends on the supervisor having a clear understanding of the goals of supervision and being able to communicate those goals to the supervisee.

1.6 Importance of counselling supervision

- Explore the way they work, stand back and get different perspectives on their clients and the way they work with them,
- Become more aware of the way they affect and are affected by their clients,
- Relieve emotions and recharge energies and ideals,
- Feel supported in their competence and confidence as professionals, and
- Receive feedback and challenge the quality of their practice, monitor and develop ethical decision-making.
- Supervision is a central form of support, where supervisee can focus on their difficulties as a worker as well as have the supervisor share some of the responsibility for their work with the clients.
- Supervision forms part of the supervisees' continual learning and development as workers, eventually helping them to learn how to be supervisors.

- A good supervisor can also help supervisees use their own resources better, manage their workload and challenge their inappropriate ways of coping.
- Finally, there is research to show that good supervision correlates with job satisfaction” (Hawkins, & Shohet, 2000).

The three main areas of counselling supervision

Counselling supervision has three main areas;

Formative (growth-based); the supervisor shares their experience to teach the supervisee.

Normative (monitoring-based); the supervisor expects the supervisee to account and justify their work.

Restorative (support-based); the supervisor offers support if the supervisee is struggling with an ethical issue or an aspect of their practice.

1.7 Principles of counselling supervision

Counselling supervision enhances staff retention and morale. It is a primary means of improving workforce retention and job satisfaction (Roche, Todd, & O’Connor, 2007).

Every counsellor, regardless of level of skill and experience, needs and has a right to supervision. Supervision needs to be tailored to the knowledge base, skills, experience, and assignment of each counsellor.

Counselling supervision needs the full support of agency administrators. Just as treatment programs want clients to be in an atmosphere of growth and openness to new ideas, counsellors should be in an environment where learning and professional development and opportunities are valued and provided for all staff.

The supervisory relationship is the crucible in which ethical practice is developed and reinforced. The supervisor needs to model sound ethical and legal practice in the supervisory relationship. This is where issues of ethical practice arise and can be addressed.

Counselling supervision is a skill in and of itself that has to be developed. Good counsellors tend to be promoted into supervisory positions with the assumption that they have the requisite skills to provide professional counselling supervision.

Culture and other contextual variables influence the supervision process; supervisors need to continually strive for cultural competence. Supervisors require cultural competence at several levels. Cultural competence involves the counsellor's response to clients, the supervisor's response to counsellors, and the program's response to the cultural needs of the diverse community it serves. Since supervisors are in a position to serve as catalysts for change, they need to develop proficiency in addressing the needs of diverse clients and personnel.

Things a New Supervisor Should Know

Eight truths a beginning supervisor should commit to memory are listed below;

1. The reason for supervision is to ensure quality client care. The primary goal of counselling supervision is to protect the welfare of the client and ensure the integrity of clinical services.
2. Supervision is all about the relationship. As in counselling, developing the alliance between the counsellor and the supervisor is the key to good supervision.
3. Culture and ethics influence all supervisory interactions. Contextual factors, culture, race, and ethnicity all affect the nature of the supervisory relationship. Some models of supervision (Holloway, 1995) have been built primarily around the role of context and culture in shaping supervision.
4. A supervisor should be human and have a sense of humor. As role models, you need to show that everyone makes mistakes and can admit to and learn from these mistakes. As a supervisor rely first on direct observation of your counsellors and give specific feedback. The best way to determine a counsellor's skills is to observe him or her and to receive input from the clients about their perceptions of the counselling relationship.
6. A supervisor should have and practice a model of counselling and of supervision. Before you can teach a supervisee knowledge and skills, you must first know the philosophical and theoretical foundations on which you, as a supervisor, stand. Counsellors need to know what they are going to learn from you, based on your model of counselling and supervision.
7. A supervisor should take care of himself or herself spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically.

8. A supervisor has a unique position as an advocate for the agency, the counsellor, and the client. As a supervisor, you have a wonderful opportunity to assist in the skill and professional development of your staff, advocating for the best interests of the supervisee, the client, and your organization.

1.8 Summary

In this lecture, we have explored the meaning of counselling supervision, we have attempted to differentiate between counselling and counsellor supervision, the purposes and goals of supervision in counselling, benefits of Counselling Supervision and we have looked at the principles of counselling supervision. We have also familiarized with what a new supervisor should know.

1.9 Further Reading

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