

COUNSELLING SUPERVISION

LECTURE 6

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LECTURE 6: SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

Topic contents:

- Supervisory relationship.
- Components of supervisory relationship.
- Supervisory Working alliance.
- Essential elements of the supervisor–supervisee relationship.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Discuss the supervisory relationship.
- Identify the components of supervisory relationship.
- Explore the concept of working alliance.
- Essential elements of the supervisor–supervisee relationship.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- The supervisory relationship is the heart and soul of the supervision experience, regardless of the experience and developmental level of the supervisee (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 1993).
- A safe, trusting environment, characterized by mutual respect, is required for a supervisee to be open to feedback, to be willing to learn and change (Borders, 2001).

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- A positive and productive relationship between supervisor and supervisee is essential if supervision is to be effective (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; G. Corey et al. (2009).
- A successful supervisory process is enhanced by the kind of person the supervisor is and his or her ability to establish and maintain a good connection with the supervisee Corey et al. (2010).

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- The methods and techniques supervisors use are more likely to be helpful if an effective and collaborative working relationship with supervisees has been established.
- As Borders and Brown (2005) commented, “A strong and positive working relationship will enhance the supervision experience and serve as a buffer for those challenging moments that inevitably will occur”.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- Supervision is evaluative in nature, yet the supervisees are asked to be vulnerable and self disclose their professional inadequacies and their personal biases to the same person who will grade them, write letters of recommendation or complete reference forms for licensure.

TASK

- Recall your own experience as a supervisee, describe the supervisory relationship with your supervisor.
- How did the experience affect your relationship with the supervisor and your client?
- What are the qualities of a counselling supervisor?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR

- They are empathic, genuine, open and flexible.
- They respect their supervisees as persons and as developing professionals and are sensitive to individual differences (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity) of supervisees.
- They also are comfortable with the authority and evaluative functions inherent in the supervisor role, giving clear and frequent indications of their evaluation of the counselor's performance.
- Good supervisors really enjoy supervision, are committed to helping the counsellor grow and evidence commitment to the supervision enterprise by their preparation for and involvement in supervision sessions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR

- These supervisors evidence high levels of conceptual functioning, have a clear sense of their own strengths and limitations as a supervisor.
- They are aware of how their personal traits and interpersonal style may affect the conduct of supervision.
- Finally, good supervisors have a sense of humor which helps both the supervisor and supervisee get through rough spots in their work together and achieve a healthy perspective on their work.

SUPERVISOR COMPETENCIES

- Knowledge of the role and function of counselling supervision.
- Knowledge of legal, ethical and regulatory guidelines as they apply to supervision.
- Competencies in all areas of care in which supervisory occur.
- Ability to set goals and objectives, create and implement a supervision plan.

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- Familiarize with the methods of evaluation and ability to apply them fairly.
 - Understand existence of dual relationships and their impact of supervisory objectivity and judgement.
 - Documentation skills.
 - Knowledge of multicultural issues and ability to respond to multicultural differences.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- Supportive; the supervisor should be interested and motivated in teaching the supervisee, in a manner that makes the supervisee feel heard, encouraged and capable.
- In a supportive supervisory relationship, supervisees should feel comfortable to discuss clients, including both personal and clinical challenges that arise when working with clients and ask questions as needed.

COMPONENTS

- Bi-directional trust; supervisees should know that the supervisor will teach them the skills needed to perform ethical and effective therapeutic work.
- Supervisors should actively work to create a safe, professional, and inviting environment for open and challenging discussion of supervisees' training.

COMPONENTS

- The supervisor should use self-disclosure, as appropriate, to demonstrate this bi-directional trust and encourage and welcome ongoing feedback from the supervisee.
- Bi-directional respect; this includes being willing to provide constructive feedback to supervisees, and to be open and receptive to receiving constructive feedback from supervisees as well.

COMPONENTS

- Providing supervision that is supportive, trusting, and respectful creates an open and collaborative learning environment. This foundation sets the stage for the relationship to thrive.

HOLLOWAY MODEL

- Holloway (1999), identified three essential components of the supervisory relationship:
 - The interpersonal structure of the relationship, including the dimensions of power and involvement;
 - The phase of the relationship;
 - The supervisory contract, consisting of the establishment of a set of expectations for the tasks and functions of supervision.

PHASES OF SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- Holloway (1995) conceptualized the supervisory relationship by looking at it from a contextual perspective. The model described three phases of the supervisory relationship.
- At the mature phase, the emphasis is on increasing the individual nature of the relationship and promoting social bonding. As the roles of supervisor and supervisee become less distinct, trainees develop skills of case conceptualization, increase their levels of self-confidence and are willing to explore personal issues as they relate to professional performance.

EARLY PHASE

- During the early phase of the relationship, the tasks are;
- Clarifying the nature of the relationship, developing ways to work collaboratively and effectively in supervision, designing a supervision contract, selecting supportive teaching interventions, developing competencies, and designing treatment plans.

MATURE PHASE

- At the mature phase, the emphasis is on increasing the individual nature of the relationship and promoting social bonding.
- As the roles of supervisor and supervisee become less distinct, trainees develop skills of case conceptualization, increase their levels of self-confidence, and are willing to explore personal issues as they relate to professional performance.

TERMINATION PHASE

- The termination phase reflects a greater collaborative working structure. Trainees understand the linkage between theory and practice in greater depth and there is less need for direction from the supervisor.
- This is the time for a summative evaluation process, including a discussion of the meaning of termination and the feelings and thoughts associated with it.
- Time is also allocated for discussion of future professional development and goals.

SUPERVISION WORKING ALLIANCE MODEL

- A strong working alliance is an important aspect of successful supervision.
- Bordin (1983), proposed the 'supervision working alliance' (SWA) model, which consisted of three core elements:
- Mutually agreed upon goals, tasks and the bond between supervisor-supervisee as they worked together towards the same goals.

SWA MODEL

- He emphasized the importance of rupture and repair factors of the alliance which are essential in relationships.
- The model is a quality explanation of the supervisory relationship because of the educative function and the evaluative component of supervision.
- The model can be used in building a therapeutic working relationships with clients (Borders & Brown, 2005; Corey et al., 2010).

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

- Establishing trust and a safe environment; a place where supervisees feel safe and free to explore, share, and experiment with new ideas and strategies.
- Encourage supervisees to bring up any concerns they have about trust during the supervisory sessions without the supervisor being judgmental or using untrustworthy tone.

SELF DISCLOSURE

- The more free supervisees are to self-disclose thoughts, fears, hopes, and expectations regarding the work they are doing, the more valuable the supervisory sessions will be. This level of openness is built on a foundation of trust.
- Self-disclosure by the supervisor can be beneficial if done in a timely and appropriate manner. Especially when supervisors are willing to disclose their own struggles as counsellors (Borders, 2005).

TRANSFERENCE AND COUNTERTRANSFERENCE TRANSFERENCE

- The client's unconscious shifting to the therapist of feelings and fantasies, both positive and negative, that are displacements from reactions to significant others from the client's past (Corey, 2009).
- The role of the supervisor is to be aware of transference reactions and to assist their supervisees in developing their own sense of competence and problem-solving ability.
- Countertransference refers to the reactions therapists have toward their clients that are likely to interfere with their objectivity (Corey, 2009)

COUNTER TRANSFERENCE

- Unresolved personal issues can be triggered through interactions with supervisees.
- It is critical for the supervisor to be self-aware, identify countertransference that may arise and know its effects on the supervisory relationship.
- Supervisors should identify and deal with their reactions through their own supervision, consultation or personal therapy.

DIVERSITY ISSUES

- Supervisors need to understand how contextual factors influence supervisory relationships.
- Be aware of the trainee's cultural experience, gender, cognitive and ego development, professional identity, experience level in counselling, theoretical orientation to counselling and self-presentation.

DIVERSITY

- Supervisors can teach their supervisees to respect the role that diversity plays in the counseling relationship by making supervision a multicultural experience in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, gender, and age are discussed
- Supervisors can model curiosity about the supervisee's differences and be eager to learn from the supervisee as well.

APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

- It is not uncommon to enjoy the collegiality of the supervisory relationship, to become friendly with a supervisee, and to extend the relationship beyond the sessions, especially as the supervisee matures professionally
- Supervisors must take full responsibility for determining the limits of the relationship and take action when they believe the boundaries are becoming less clear or when expanding the boundaries is adversely affecting the supervisory task.

POWER AND AUTHORITY

- The supervisory relationship by definition has a built-in power differential; the supervisor is the authority figure in the relationship (Bogo & Dill, 2008; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).
- Supervisors continually evaluate the work of the supervisee and provide that evaluative information to licensing boards, prospective employers, and other requestors long after the supervisory relationship has ended.
- Supervisors are responsible to clearly inform their supervisees of the evaluative structure of the relationship, the expectancies and goals for supervision, the criteria for evaluation, and the limits of confidentiality in supervision (Holloway, 1999).

PARALLEL PROCESS

- What happens in the counselling room may be played out between therapist and supervisor subsequently.
- For example, perhaps the therapist becomes angry, or tearful when talking about his client and discovers that in fact his client is experiencing those same emotions.
- Parallel process may be more subtle though: recognising when you feel bored, defensive, or other less obvious emotions can help you understand the client-therapist system better.
- Parallel process may also operate in reverse – the relationship between you and your client may mirror what happens outside of your awareness between you and your supervisor!

PARALLEL PROCESS

- The following questions exemplify the kind of enquiry that helps you recognise parallel process:
- How am I similar to my client?
- What am I holding back from my supervisor?
- How do I regard my supervisor when I talk about my client?
- How do I regard my client in the sessions immediately after supervision?

PARALLEL PROCESS

- Parallel process interactions between supervisor and supervisee may offer insights into the way the supervisee relates to clients.
- Because certain aspects of the relationship between the supervisee and his or her client may be paralleled in the supervisory relationship, it is useful for supervisors and supervisees to pay attention to and explore the various manifestations of parallel process in supervision.
- Supervisors need to pay close attention to this process to facilitate effective supervision as well as to encourage the personal and professional growth of supervisees.

PERSONAL VARIABLES

- Supervisors should be aware of the many personal variables that may affect the supervisory relationship. These include values, attitudes, beliefs, age, gender, ethnicity, and spirituality.
- The impact of similarities and differences between the supervisor and supervisee is relevant to explore in supervision.
- Our values and attitudes affect the supervision that we provide.

ESTABLISHING A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- Treat supervisees with respect; be open and honest about what you do and do not know.
- Work at developing a spirit of mutual trust and collaboration.
- Listen diligently to what supervisees are both saying and not saying. Tune into their fears, struggles, and hopes.
- Have a clear understanding of the purpose and the limits of the supervisory relationship.

CONT.

- Be willing to seek consultation when you are unfamiliar with the topic under discussion.
- Be clear on the boundaries of the relationship. Guarding against imposition of your values.
- Work on having a clear understanding of your values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the range of typical issues that come up in supervision.

CONT.

- Discuss with your supervisees their values and beliefs.
- Talk openly about how values and beliefs affect the supervisory relationship and supervisees' work.
- Initiate discussions with supervisees regarding their values about marriage and divorce, family values, cultural diversity, sexual orientation, religion and spirituality, suicide, child rearing and violence.

SUMMARY

- We have discussed what entails the supervisory relationship, components of supervisory relationship.
- We have identified the essential elements of the supervisor–supervisee relationship.
- We have discussed the various tips for establishing a good working relationship with supervisees.

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NEXT LECTURE

Theories of Counselling