How to Conduct Effective and Ineffective Supervision

Nick Ladany, Ph.D.
Lehigh University
nil3@lehigh.edu
(1) Enhance one’s understanding of how to conceptualize supervision process and outcome

(2) Gain knowledge in the elements of effective and ineffective supervision

(3) Develop an awareness of covert processes that influence supervision work

Questions and comments welcome throughout
Elements of Effective Supervision
(Ladany, 2005; Ladany & Inman, in press)

- Attend to the Supervisory Relationship
- Apply Models of Supervision (e.g., Critical-Events Model)
- Attend to Unique Features of Supervision
  - Evaluative
  - Educative
  - Involuntary
- Engage in Role Induction
- Differentiate Supervision from Psychotherapy
- Attend to Supervisee-focused and Client-focused Outcomes
- Recognize the importance of Covert Processes
- Keep abreast of Ethical and Legal Issues
- Offer Evaluations that include Goal-Setting and Feedback
- Enhance Multicultural Competence
- Tend to Administrative Responsibilities (e.g., note-taking, s’ee oversight)
- Consider Group Supervision and Peer Supervision as important adjuncts
- Secure Supervision Training
A Critical Events-Based Model of Supervision

Ladany, Friedlander, & Nelson (2005)

The Supervisory Working Alliance

Marker

Task Environment

Consists of Interaction Sequences

Resolution

Successful or Unsuccessful
Purpose and Scope

- Theoretically- and empirically-informed guide to practice
- Pantheoretical, contextual, interpersonal
- Useful for supervisors and supervisors-in-training across mental health disciplines
Assumptions of Model

In practice, supervisors do not focus on distal (big “O”) outcomes with their supervisees, but rather on immediate processes and proximal and intermediate outcomes.

Good supervision is interpersonal and contextual – taking into account setting, timing, supervisees’ developmental needs, individual differences, culture, etc.
What is an “Event”?

- An event or episode is a period of time in the process of therapy/supervision during which a specific task is addressed.
- Events have an identifiable beginning, middle, and end.
- Events occur within and across sessions.
- Events can occur within events.
Critical Events

- Common, possibly universal, challenging
  - despite theoretical differences
  - despite differences in setting, professional specialty, etc.

- Pose a dilemma that cannot/should not be ignored by the supervisor
Supervisory events are qualitatively different from therapy events because supervision is:

- explicitly evaluative
- explicitly educational
- typically involuntary
A Critical Events-Based Model of Supervision


- The Supervisory Working Alliance
- Marker
- Task Environment
  - Consists of Interaction Sequences
- Resolution
  - Successful or Unsuccessful
The Supervisory Working Alliance
(Bordin, 1983)

- Mutual Agreement about the Goals of Supervision
  - e.g., mastery of specific therapy skills
  - e.g., understanding how the trainee’s personal issues influence work with clients

- Mutual Agreement about the Tasks of Supervision
  - e.g., review therapy session tapes
  - e.g., trainee is responsible for initiating supervisory discussion

- Emotional Bond
  - Mutual caring, liking, trusting
Critical Events

- Remediating Skill Difficulties and Deficits
- Heightening Multicultural Awareness
- Negotiating Role Conflicts
- Working Through Countertransference
- Managing Sexual Attraction
- Repairing Gender-Related Misunderstandings & Missed Understandings
- Addressing Problematic Supervisee Emotions and Behaviors
Marker

- Supervisee’s behavior, statement, or series of statements signaling the need for a specific kind of help
- “Informs” the supervisor of the task to be addressed
- Can be explicit or implicit
- Different dilemmas can be signaled with similar Markers (e.g., prolonged silence)
Task Environment

Interaction Sequences

- Focus on the Supervisory Working Alliance
- Normalize Experience
- Attend to Parallel Process
- Focus on Skill
- Focus on Self-Efficacy
- Exploration of Feelings
- Focus on Supervisee’s Dynamics
- Assess Knowledge
- Focus on Evaluation
- Case Discussion
- Focus on Multicultural Awareness
- Focus on Countertransference

- Careful of too much Case Review
Resolution

- Self-Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Supervisory Alliance

Continuum of Successful to Unsuccessful
Portotype Call Critic Call Event in Supervision Mark Revolution Role
Example of a Sexual Attraction Event

The Supervisory Working Alliance

Marker: Supervisee reports attraction toward client

Task Environment

Interaction Sequence #1
Exploration of Feelings

Interaction Sequence #2
Focus on Alliance

Interaction Sequence #3
Focus on Countertransference

Interaction Sequence #4
Normalize Experience

Resolution: Enhanced Awareness of Influence of Sexual Attraction on Therapy
Ineffective Supervision

Reviews of the supervision literature
Not all supervision is rosy
Supervisees get harmed
Supervision failures are a result of:
- Supervisor factors
- Supervisee factors
- Dyadic factors
(Inman & Ladany, in press; Ladany & Inman, 2008)
# Degree of Trainee Openness to Learning and Supervisor Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence of Supervisor</th>
<th>Incompetent</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Competent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Learner</strong></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive Learner</strong></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indifferent Learner</strong></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements of Ineffective Supervision
Supervisor Factors

- Inclination to infantalize supervisees
- Incompetent evaluation
  - Too positive --- Gatekeeping
  - No valid or reliable instruments
- Multiculturally misguided (i.e., racist, sexist, homophobic)
- Ethically challenged in relation to supervision
- Inadequate Training
  - Supervisor specific training
  - Misapplication of theory (unique features of supervision)
Supervisee Factors

- Openness to learning
- Receptivity to feedback
- Training in helping skills
- Capacity to learn helping skills
- Capacity for deep self-awareness
- Capacity for knowledge acquisition (perhaps over-rated)
Dyadic Factors

- Supervisory alliance
- Too much case discussion
- Over indulgence in client-focused outcomes
Recommendations

- Increase supervisor accountability
- Supervisor training
- Recognize the value of post-degree supervision
- Reconsider the role of evaluation in supervision
Supervision Secrets: Fibbing, Fighting, & Fornicating
Assumptions about Supervision and Nondisclosure

• Supervisees ‘nondisclose’ more than they disclose
• Sometimes what is not said is more important than what is said
Nondisclosure Studies

- Ladany, Walker, Pate-Carolan, & Gray (in press); Banks & Ladany (2002); Ladany, Walker, & Melincoff (2001); Ladany & Melincoff (1999); Ladany & Lehrman-Waterman (1999); Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt (1996)

- Content of and reasons for nondisclosure
- Supervisee nondisclosure post multiple sessions
- Supervisee nondisclosure post single session, longitudinally
- Supervisor nondisclosure post multiple sessions
- Supervisee nondisclosure post single session, longitudinally
- Nondisclosures in relation to supervision process and outcome variables
Supervisee Nondisclosure Categories

- Negative Reactions to Supervisor (90%)
  - Unpleasant, disapproving, or critical thoughts, feelings, or characterizations relating to the supervisor
  - Examples:
    - He is very rigid and narrow in theory and practice
    - I thought he had a big blind spot on how to help me in supervision
    - She's disorganized
    - He's obnoxious
  - Reasons: Deference to the Supervisor, Impression Management, and Political Suicide
Supervisee Nondisclosure Categories

- **Personal Issues**
  - Thoughts about the self, experiences, or problems in the context of the individual's life that may or may not be known in public contexts such as the supervision setting.
  - **Examples:**
    - Wondered what teachers and students reactions would be if I revealed that I am Bisexual
    - Specific family crisis
    - I have not told my supervisor that I'm pregnant
    - **Reason:** Too Personal
Supervisee Nondisclosure Categories

Clinical Mistakes
Thoughts related to perceived errors or inadequacy as a counselor
Examples:
I sometimes feel I made a mistake in a session and wait till next session to try to "correct" it
Feeling like I hadn't checked out all the symptoms of a disorder with a client
I think I sometimes confuse my clients with interventions that are not at the client's level of understanding
Reason: Impression Management
Supervisee Nondisclosure Categories

Evaluation Concerns

Uncertainty or uneasiness about the supervisor's assessment(s) of the Supervisee

Examples:

I do not know whether my supervisor's evaluation of me is generally positive or negative

I wonder how my supervisor will evaluate me

Worry that she will not give a good letter of recommendation
Negative Reactions to Client

Unpleasant, disapproving, or critical thoughts, feelings, or characterizations relating to the client

Examples:

- Some clients appear physically threatening
- Anger toward client for bringing up his racist/chauvinistic feelings/thoughts
- One of my clients has poor personal hygiene which leads to negative reactions in me
- Getting frustrated when clients don't show and don't cancel
- That sometimes I'm bored
Client-Counselor Attraction Issues

Thoughts or feelings about the client and/or counselor appearing or feeling drawn to or interested in the other person in a sexual or physical sense

Examples:
- Sexual attraction to a female client
- Found a male client attractive, reminded me of type of guys I used to like
- Feeling attracted
- Sexual feelings toward a client

Reason: ?
Supervisee Nondisclosure Categories

- Supervisor Appearance
  - Comments, thoughts, or feelings about the supervisor's external image
  - Examples:
    - He wears clothes out of the 70's
    - She seems so off the wall as far as dress, language, etc.
    - Disapprove of dress habits
    - I like his silver belt buckle and general style of dress
Supervisee-Nondisclosure Categories

- Supervisee-Supervisor Attraction Issues
  - Thoughts or feelings about the Supervisee and/or supervisor appearing or feeling drawn to or interested in the other person in a sexual or physical sense
  - Examples:
    - At one point I felt some attraction for my supervisor
    - Being attracted to his balance of power and sensibility and this translating to a physical attraction
    - I think my supervisor is very attractive and also brilliant
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

- Negative Reactions to Supervisee’s Counseling & Professional Performance (74%)
  - Negative thoughts and feelings regarding the Supervisee’s clinical and professional skills.
  - Examples:
    - She has personal agendas that interfere with non-biased counseling
    - Self disclosure should have been absolutely avoided in that case.
  - Reasons: Supervisee will Discover When Developmentally Ready and Addressed Indirectly
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

Supervisor Personal Issues

Issues related to the self and the supervisor’s personal life and experiences

Examples:
- Didn’t want to meet for supervision due to terminally ill relative that I needed to attend to
- Intern at one point shared that she was clinically depressed. I did not share that I had ever been clinically depressed
- Problems my daughter had at school

Reasons: Irrelevant to the goals and tasks of supervision
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

- Negative Reactions to Supervisee’s Supervision Performance
  - Negative thoughts and feelings about the Supervisee’s reactions in supervision such as the Supervisee not listening to supervisor instructions, or problems in supervision due to the Supervisee.

Examples:
- He takes whatever I say in supervision and incorporates it into what he “feeds back” by the end of the hour
- Are you really going to try that technique or are you just appeasing me?
- That I am angry that he has canceled many of our sessions
- I wish she would bring in a tape for us to listen to
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

- Negative Supervisor Self-Efficacy
  - Concerns about own performance as a supervisor. Concerns about self-efficacy as a supervisor and thoughts about the Supervisee’s perceptions of him or her
  - Examples:
    - Wonder if she questions my credibility because of age differences
    - That I may not be as helpful or astute as she may wish
    - Initially, I experienced anxiety and tension when interacting with my Supervisee
  - Reason: Supervisor’s Own Issue
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

Supervisee Appearance

Thoughts about the way the Supervisee dresses and looks, as well as personal habits that the supervisor notices

Examples:

- Gosh her clothes are nice they look expensive
- How can an intern afford this wardrobe? I’m jealous;
- Why do you always wear the same clothes?
Supervisor NonDisclosure Categories

- Positive Reactions to Supervisee’s Counseling and Professional Performance
  - Positive thoughts and feelings regarding the Supervisee’s clinical and professional skills. This includes positive thoughts about the Supervisee’s interventions in the counseling session
  - Examples:
    - She’s doing a great job
    - As a new professional, I don’t think I was nearly as comfortable asserting myself
    - How enjoyable it is to work with the Supervisee
Supervisor Nondisclosure Categories

Attraction to Supervisee

Thoughts or feelings about the Supervisee being physically appealing

Examples:

- Strong sexual attraction to Supervisee
- That the Supervisee is attractive to me
- I find my Supervisee attractive
Limitations

 Recall
 Limited depth of response
 U.S.-based samples
 Pre-degreed supervisees
Future Research Directions

- Large sample post-session recall of nondisclosures (Mehr & Ladany, in preparation)
- Post-degreed supervisees
- International samples (e.g., Schröder & Gilbert Webb & Wheeler, 1998)
- Modes of supervision (e.g., group, peer)
- Process and outcome link
Conclusions

- Sometimes supervisees keep a lot of important information from their supervisors.
- Sometimes supervisors do not disclose things they should to their supervisees.
- Is there ever really “nothing to discuss in supervision?”
Assessing Evaluation Approaches

What We Know

- The “germ theory” of psychotherapy training (Beutler, 1988) suggests students “catch” skills through exposure.
- Trainees are evaluated primarily qualitatively.
- Most supervisors (90%) use trainee self-report as a method to assess trainee performance, however, less than 60% rely on audiotapes and less than 40% rely on videotapes (Ladany & Melincoff, 1997).
What We Know

The supervisor's general perceptions of the trainee may influence the trainee’s evaluation (Carey et al., 1988).

Many supervisors may not be fulfilling their evaluation responsibilities adequately or ethically (Keith-Speigel & Koocher, 1985; Ladany et al., 1999).

Measures used to assess trainee competence are often outdated and, generally, psychometrically unsound (Ellis & Ladany, 1997; Ellis, D’Luiso, & Ladany, in press).
Components of Assessing Trainee Evaluation Approaches

 Mode of Counseling
   Individual, Group, Family, or Couples

 Domain of Trainee Behaviors
   Counseling or Supervision

 Competence Area
   Theoretical Conceptualization, Helping Skills, Counseling Techniques, Professionalism, Multicultural Competence, Clinical Disorders, Assessment, Administration, Supervision Behaviors, Countertransference, Self-Evaluation
Components of Assessing Trainee Evaluation Approaches (cont.)

Method
- Trainee Self-Report, Case Notes, Audiotape, Videotape, Live Supervision, Co-therapy, Role Play, Experiences in Supervision

Proportion of Caseload
- All Clients, Subgroup of Clients, One Client

Segment of Experience
- Entire Training Experience, Part of Entire Training Experience, Specific Session, Segment of a Session
Components of Assessing Trainee Evaluation Approaches (cont.)

- **Time Period**
  - Early, Middle, Late in Client Treatment
  - Early, Middle, Late in Training Experience

- **Evaluator**
  - Supervisor, Clients, Peers, Objective Raters

- **Level of Proficiency**
  - Demonstrated Skill, Comparison to Cohort Group
Components of Assessing Trainee Evaluation Approaches (cont.)

Reliability Issues
- Measurement Error, Supervisor Bias for Qualitative, Statistical for Quantitative
- Interrater Agreement

Validity Issues
- Construct Validity

Format
- Quantitative vs. Qualitative
- Structured vs. Unstructured
Evaluator: Supervisor

Rate the competence of your trainee’s knowledge base on a 1 to 5 scale.

Knowledge base is defined as “demonstrated good understanding of theories and research in psychology, human development, counseling/psychotherapy, assessment, and psychopathology.”
Assessment of a given area of competence based on the trainee’s developmental level.

Task for Supervisor:
- Assess the developmental level of the trainee.
- Know the competence associated with the given developmental level of the trainee’s cohort group.
- Compare and contrast the trainee’s expressed competence to the associated developmental level.
Unclear, anti-therapeutic, or minimally relevant items, such as:

- trainee’s personal grooming or appearance
- trainee keeps client task-centered
- trainee maintains her or his office neat and orderly
- trainee has a clear, well-defined set of values which he or she communicates in a therapeutic fashion.
Effective Evaluation Strategies

(Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001)

Goal Setting
- A specific standard of proficiency on a task, which is to be accomplished within a specified time limit

Feedback
- The supervisor verbally sharing her or his thoughts regarding the supervisee's progress on agreed upon goals
- Formative
  - Ongoing, informal feedback that occurs throughout supervision
- Summative
  - Supervisor steps back and makes decisions regarding how well the supervisee is meeting the pre-established standards of performance
Goal Setting

Features of effective goal setting:

- Specific, explicit, and clearly worded
- Feasible in regard to capacity, opportunity, and resources
- Require the supervisee to "stretch" herself or himself
- Related to the task formulated
- Modifiable over time
- Measurable
- Ordered into priority
- Mutually agreed upon
- Clarified early in the supervisory relationship

- Identify and set proficiency standards clearly
Six key features of effective supervisor feedback:

- Systematic
- Timely
- Clearly understood
- Balanced between positive and negative statements
- Comes from a credible source
- Reciprocal
Assume you are the supervisor

List 3 questions, observations, or issues you would like to cover in supervision

List 3 criteria on which you are able to evaluate this trainee

Provide an evaluative comment for each criterion identified

Notice any changes in your observations from the first time you saw the session

Complete first 10 items of Supervisee Evaluation Form

Break into groups of 5-6
  Discuss your reviews