ADDICTION Messenger

Ideas for Treatment Improvement

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Unifying science, education and services to transform lives

Clinical Supervision - Part 3
Creating A Learning Environment

"Treat a man as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be"

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson ~

The style and personal qualities that a supervisor brings to supervision are important parts of the learning process and can facilitate the atmosphere of a learning environment. Style, as described by Munson (1993) is "a manner that permits the supervisor to use it to promote learning and guide interaction in supervision". The qualities they demonstrate to the supervisee can form the bases for their behaviors and actions. Munson (1993) states that "supervision should be a mutual sharing of questions, concerns, observations, speculations, and selection of alternative techniques to apply to practice."

To facilitate the learning environment both the supervisee and supervisor should have an openness to the thought that learning is a continuous, developmental, life-long process. Supervisees that are open and receptive to learning and feedback also contribute to learning. Supervisors can give attention to the assessment of supervisee's individual learning needs at the beginning and throughout the supervisory relationship.

Creating a learning environment and culture is something that can be modeled by the supervisor. A supervisor can begin by viewing supervisees as "learners" and reward those who acquire, apply and share new knowledge.

Learning should be constant, and supervisors can create the culture for making it happen through encouraging staff learning independently or in small groups. Group meetings in an agency can be structured in a way that puts a focus on learning. Participatory learning including teaching, role play practice, and problem solving are often the best ways for adults to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Creating the Environment
Embedding learning into an organization goes beyond the supervisors. Managers, staff, and natural leaders can also endorse and commit to creating a climate for learning. They can be actively and visibly engaged in the learning process to foster a climate of discovery and innovation.

The learning environment should encourage an understanding that the results of learning and professional development are tied to strategic choices made by the organization and not just a frill or an "add-on".

Structural Supports
Structural supports can be put in place to facilitate the learning environment. Such supports can include making time available to employees to engage in discussion, reading, reflecting, and debriefing. These communication processes facilitate teamwork,

networking, information-sharing, openness to information, and feedback.

Human Resource Practices

An agency that nurtures learning looks it, rewards it, and builds it through clinical supervision that emphasizes continuous learning. Making coaches, mentors and learning opportunities available are all part of a learning agency. Within a learning environment, all staff are valued for their contributions, questions, suggestions and insights. Helping staff thrive is seen as a value held in the agency.

Learning Culture

An agency can put in place mechanisms which support individuals, reduce discomfort and increase ease with regard to "not knowing". Acknowledging that you don't "have all the answers" can be difficult but is necessary to successfully implement an organizational culture that supports a learning environment. Examples of how to do this include:

Normalize:
Confusion, uncertainty and questions can be seen as normal and a necessary part of learning.

Establish Supports for Learning:
"Communities of Practice" that enable informal dialogue on work-related issues can create an atmosphere for identifying questions or innovations. They can take many forms, such as: creating a place and time for conversation about ideas and the impatience that can go along with not having all the answers, and/or holding "exploratory" opportunities with leaders in the agency and experts who are active within the group.

Skill-Building in Dialogic Skills:
Staff can be encouraged to learn the skills of inquiry and collaborative exploration, rather than ending a conversation with a convenient decision for the sake of being expedient. Helping staff and managers understand when it's appropriate to use these skills, and when fast-track decision-making is appropriate can also be valuable.

Regularly Marking Progress:
Boundaries can be placed around the process of exploration time. Take time to clarify what is known and what has been learned so progress can link learning with decision-making, priority-setting and action.

Learning should be constant, and agencies can create the culture to make it happen through:

•Developing an atmosphere that values staff learning on their own and through others,

•Facilitating learning by making your group meetings useful and appropriate for learning, and

•Addressing and using the lessons learned from previous projects within your agency as an invaluable part of the learning process.

Working within a learning environment doesn't have to take a lot of time. Enlist the aid of staff and spend just a little time on education over the course of each week. When a learning environment has been established staff may begin thinking ahead, solving problems and challenging themselves - becoming a much more productive group - and that's the whole purpose: creating an environment in which learning is an investment for the future.

Supervisory Relationship

A positive supervisory alliance is an important part of a productive learning environment. The following paragraphs focus on the alliance structure and approaches that can address alliance strain and difficulties in the supervisory relationship.

The alliance is constructed by both the supervisor and supervisee with both being responsible for its development.

The qualities that affect the development of a learning atmosphere also affect the supervisory relationship. Interpersonal and professional qualities such as empathy, warmth, respect, making time for sharing clinical knowledge and skills, and establishing a clear progression of supervision goals, contribute to the development of an effective supervisory alliance and learning environment.

Negative experiences which may occur can result in stress or impasses in the alliance if they are not effectively addressed. These experiences can threaten the working alliance and compromise the supervisor's ability to monitor the treatment the supervisee is providing and to safeguard the client. Dealing with negative experiences promptly in an atmosphere of learning can be valuable to the alliance.

Negative experiences or events involving shame, parallel process, and boundary violations are particularly important since they can have a significant impact on the alliance.

Shame

Supervisees may feel embarrassed when personal lapses or influences are discussed with a supervisor. They may also feel shame when a discrepancy is discovered between their performance and personal or agency standards. Moments of shame should not be surprising considering the demands and high standards expected of addiction professionals.

Supervisors can explore the supervisee's feelings of shame

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or embarrassment by focusing attention on the supervisee's experience of the supervisor's comments and recommen

dations in an empathetic and supportive manner which facilitates learning. Supervisors can also acknowledge the challenges involved in learning the addiction counseling profession.

Parallel Process
Parallel process occurs when the quality of the supervisory relationship affects the counselor-client relationship. A positive supervisory alliance can enhance the quality of client relationships. The reverse can be true when a negative supervisory experience adversely affects clients. Maintaining an awareness of parallel process can be a challenge, especially if the counselor does not feel supported by the supervisor.

Boundary Violations
Maintaining appropriate boundaries contribute to a safe and trusting professional relationship. Violations of professional or personal boundaries and/or professional ethics undermine supervisory relationship

Supervisors are responsible for safeguarding both the counselor and the client, ensuring ongoing improvements in clinical care and counselor skill in an environment that values learning.   Creating such an environment encourages an ongoing assessment of quality, a value for personal growth and development, and a concern for continuously improving client outcomes.

Other Ways to Improve the Environment
The focus here has been on the importance of a positive learning environment in treatment agencies. There are, in fact, many factors that can impact the work environment. Here are several worth considering:

• The gift of trust - trust gives staff the freedom to make decisions about tasks.

• Inclusion - replace isolation with inclusion, information and a sense of belonging to the team.

• Time and space - help staff get off the treadmill at work. Staff can get ill not from too much to do but from feeling they have too much to do all at once, all the time.

• Clear expectations - give staff a clear picture of what is expected and what priorities they are being asked to attend to.

• Job fulfillment - appreciation for doing good work and helping them realize that what they do contributes to the agency's success.

• Sharing success - help employees to see that success is something to share, not own. Share the credit.

• Email and voicemail - email overload is a huge source of frustration and anxiety in the workplace. Try to have a real person answer the phone when possible.

• The gift of clarity - in setting a future direction for the company. Productive staff need this sense of direction.

• Listening - is an art form, hearing not only what others say but understanding how they feel and what they need to do their job.

• Redistributing workloads wisely - heavy workloads are a major stress. Staff can worry their workload is preventing them from doing a good job.

Next Issue:

"SMART Treatment Planning"

Sources:

Falander, CA and Shafranske, EP (2005) **Clinical Supervision: A Competency-based Approach.** American Psychological Association. Washington, DC

Munson, CE (2002) **Handbook of Clinical Social Work Supervision** (3rd ed.) New York: Haworth Press.

Munson, CE (1993) **Clinical Social Work Supervision** (2nd ed.) New York: The Haworth Press.

ADDICTION *Messenger*

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our newly revamped and improved website features sections on:

- Tools for Addiction Counselors, Educators, Leaders/Managers
- Evidence-Based Practices
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√ Check out the publication currently featured on our home page:

"What If We Really Believed Addiction Was A Chronic Disorder?"
by William White

NAME _____

POST - TEST Series 20

#1
The supervisory agreement should involve:
a. Purposes, goals and objectives.
b. Self-disclosure.
c. Context of services and evaluation.
d. "a" and "c".

#2
The Integrated Development Model of clinical supervision includes 8 Stages.
       True   False

#3
A healthy supervisory relationship includes:
a. supervision scheduled on an "as need" basis.
b. trust on the part of the supervisee.
c. limiting self-disclosure.
d. none of the above.

#4
A example of a supervisory intervention at the Level 1 of the Integrated Development Model would include

_____
_____(fill in the blank).

#5
Supervisors should clarify with supervisees that the supervisory relationship will include open communication and two-way feedback, and therapy.
       True   False

#6
Quality supervision is based on a relationship that is respectful, is clear regarding authority and accountability, and involves clear expectations for each person.
       True   False

#7
The role of the Supervisee includes: respect for boundaries with clients, staff and others in the setting, record keeping, prepared audio- and videotapes, adhering to requirements regarding attendance, cancellations, and rescheduling, and an openness and receptiveness of feedback.
       True   False

#8
A example of a supervisory intervention at the Level 2 of the Integrated Development Model would include:

_____
_____(fill in the blank).

#9
Which of the following make supervision high-quality:
a. Conflict resolution skills.
b. Disclosure with supervisors.
c. Mentoring, culture and gender.
d. all of the above are ingredients of high-quality supervision experience when they are willingly addressed in the supervisory experience.

#10
A new Technical Assistance Publication (TIP,) on Clinical Supervision Competencies, from SAMHSA will be published in 2006.
       True   False

Mail or FAX your completed test to NFATTC

Northwest Frontier ATTC, 810 D Street NE, Salem, OR 97301
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You can still register for continuing education hours for Series 1 through 19.
Contact Mary Anne Bryan at (503) 378-6001

We are interested in your reactions to the information provided in **Series 20** of the ***"Addiction Messenger"***. As part of your 2 continuing education hours we request that you write a short response, approximately100 words, regarding Series 20. The following list gives you some suggestions but should not limit your response.

What was your reaction to the concepts presented in Series 20?

How did you react to the amount of information provided?

How will you use this information?

Have you shared this information with co-workers?

What information would you have liked more detail about?

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