Trust in the Supervisory Relationship

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Building Trust

- Assessing Supervisee’s Strengths and Learning Needs
- Attachment Styles
- Vulnerability and Shame
Affective Development

**Anxious**
- Difficulty with self-assessment
- Fluctuates between over and under-estimating

**Comfortable Self-assured**
- Awareness of own strengths and limitations

**Self-conscious**
- Focuses on client

**Focus on interaction**
Cognitive Development

- Simplistic, over-generalized schemas
  - Refines schemas
- Difficulty distinguishing relevant material
  - Develops conceptual frameworks
- Assumption of, and focus on, similarities
  - Searches for disconfirming information

- Complex, nuanced schemas
- Pattern matching
- Critical thinking (synthesis, analysis, comparison, inference)
Behavioral Development

- **Focus on concrete interventions**
  - Impacts interventions based on thematic material, meaning to client

- **Little flexibility**
  - Individualizes client
  - Modifies interventions depending on multiple factors

- **Focus on skills**
  - Consistently monitors own work
  - Interventions based on skills and strategies
Supervisee Attachment Styles

- Secure Attachment
  - Positive supervisory alliance (Bennett et al., 2008; Renfro-Michel & Sheparis, 2009; Riggs & Bretz, 2006; White & Queener, 2003); Open-minded curious approach to reality (see Larose, et al., 2005)

- Anxious Attachment
  - Rate own development lower (Deal, et al., in press; Foster et al., 2007)

- Avoidant Attachment
  - Sense of autonomy slower to develop (Deal, et al., in press); Difficulty asking for help (Larose, et al., 2005); Rate own development lower (Foster, et al., 2007)
Supervisee Vulnerability

- **Narcissistic Vulnerability** (Brightman, 1984)
- **Shame in Supervision** (Alonso & Rutan, 1988; Talbot, 1995; Yourman, 2003)
  - Learning regression
  - Failure to live up to own standards
  - Fear of supervisor’s disapproval
  - Fear of revealing personal information
  - In response to supervisor criticism
Maintaining Trust

- Modifying supervision based on supervisee’s developmental needs

- What makes for “excellent” supervision?
## What is Excellent Supervision?

Shanfield, et al., 1993; Watkins, 1997

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<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Mid-level</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Tracks supervisee’s concerns well</td>
<td>• Intrudes their own concerns into supervisee’s story</td>
<td>• Rigid, self-concealing</td>
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<td>• Respectful, empathic</td>
<td>• Validates supervisee without fully exploring potential new meaning of the material</td>
<td>• Superficial, distracting</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practical, focused</td>
<td>• Makes general, rather than specific, comments</td>
<td>• Often does not track supervisee’s concerns</td>
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<td>• Theoretical discussions integrated with supervisee’s concerns</td>
<td>• Makes comments tangential to supervisee’s concerns</td>
<td>• Little effort to understand supervisee’s concerns about the client</td>
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<td>• Reframes general questions raised to relate to specific client issues</td>
<td>• Over-intellectualizes</td>
<td>• Trivializes issues raised by supervisee</td>
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<td>• Majority of comments focus on helping supervisee understand client’s thoughts, feelings and actions</td>
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<td>• Changes the topic; imposes unrelated material into the discussion</td>
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<td>• Gives mini-lectures</td>
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Restoring Trust

- Addressing negative supervisory events
- Addressing cross-cultural issues
- Recognizing parallel process
- Transference & countertransference
# Managing Negative Supervisory Events

(Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Nelson et al., 2008; Ramos-Sanchez, et al., 2002)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisees’ Perspective of Problems</th>
<th>Suggested Supervisory Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor unwilling to admit their role in the conflict or discuss problem</td>
<td>Be open to approaching and working through conflicts</td>
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<td>Supervisor engaged in power struggle</td>
<td>Model vulnerability and transparency</td>
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<td>Supervisor responded to conflicts with anger</td>
<td>Select intervention strategies based on supervisee’s developmental needs</td>
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<td>Supervisor not invested in supervision</td>
<td>Provide difficult feedback without shaming supervisee</td>
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<td>Supervisor highly critical</td>
<td>Appreciate mistakes as normal part of learning; openly discuss student anxiety</td>
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<td>Problems within agency</td>
<td>Attend to the supervision process</td>
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<td>Solicit regular feedback from supervisee</td>
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<td>Seek consultation from peers</td>
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Addressing Cross-Cultural Issues
(Ryde, 2000; Tummala-Narra, 2004)

- Poor outcomes result from ignoring or misunderstanding cultural differences
  - Misuse of power can reenact discrimination or lower self-esteem for minority supervisees
  - Supervisory alliance impaired

- Suggested Strategies
  - Initiate discussion of diversity issues and integrate into supervisee’s case consultations & supervisee-supervisor sessions
  - Frame attitudes and feelings as interesting > opens space for valuing/exploring experiences