

# Welcome to Stockton University

Online Seminar in Field Instruction  
(SIFI)

UNIT 4: The Supervisory Experience

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# Supervision

Supervising a graduate student is a unique professional relationship. It involves the supervisor, the student, the clients they serve, and the school. The supervisor must constantly balance providing challenging professional opportunities for the student with protecting the client's welfare.



# Student learning process

- Students arrive at their internship in a vulnerable state-- meaning they may not have much confidence yet want to do well. They are uncertain about your expectations.
- The student is in search of developing a “professional self” through the demands of the field experience.
- Keep in mind the various learning styles discussed in the previous segment.

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# Anxiety

- Common types of anxiety:
  - Anxious about doing everything right.
  - Anxious about pleasing the supervisor.
  - Anxious about receiving a passing grade.
- Approaches to lessening the anxiety:
  - Give students tasks where they can have early experiences of success. This will empower the student and help with confidence.
  - Maintain open communication, and normalize the experience of anxiety.

# Parallel Process

- Parallel Process can be described as the student's interaction with the supervisor that is similar to the client's behavior with the student.
- In work with clients, unconscious difficulties may arise. and similar difficulties may occur in supervision as parallel processes. (Cajvert, 2011)
- "Interactions between the supervisor and the supervisee may offer insights into the way the supervisee relates to clients" (Haynes, Corey & Moulton, 2006, p. 61)
- "Parallel process communicates essential information about the unrecognized problems supervisees have with patients and helps supervisors understand and address supervisee-patient impasses" (Schamess, 2006, p. 429).

# Transference/Counter Transference

- Transference occurs when one's emotional past is triggered and feelings are redirected from the past onto a current relationship or interaction in the present.
- In student supervision, counter-transference occurs when the field instructor begins to transfer his/her own feelings to the student or client.

# Transference

Transference is quite common, yet most people do not recognize this relational interaction. Everyone has something that triggers them; self-awareness is the key to containing and dealing with transference. A student may feel “stuck” with a particular client or case, and transference may be at the core of this issue.

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# Boundary Issues

- Reamer (2000) states that boundary issues occur when social workers face possible conflicts of interest and develop dual relationships.
- The supervisor enters into a second role with the supervisee (or student) which can complicate the relationship.
- Examples include engaging in a social, sexual, recreational, religious, business or other relationship outside of the agency-defined supervisor/supervisee (student) roles.

# Supervision, Not Therapy

- Your role and skill set as a field supervisor are distinct from those of counselor/therapist.
- You are a teacher, coach, consultant, mentor, evaluator, and administrator; you provide support, encouragement, and education to students while addressing an array of psychological, interpersonal, physical, and spiritual issues of clients.
- Should a student disclose personal problems you may need to clarify boundaries as well as your role.

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# Dual Relationships

- Remember becoming friends can undermine your objectivity and authority. It is always the responsibility of the supervisor to define the relationship.
- Early on establish clear roles and responsibilities in order to clarify expectations of the supervisor/supervisee relationship. This will help the student learn the importance of boundaries with clients.
- Become comfortable with the power differential. You are the student's instructor in the field. Your role is to teach ethical issues that occur in dual relationships

# Students and Boundary Issues

The student will need continuous guidance on boundary violations. Issues such as:

- Clients feeling like they are “friends”
- Not giving out one’s home phone number
- Extra visits or calls to client not on agency time
- Exchange of gifts (what is the agency’s policy?)
- Physical contact that is unacceptable/acceptable
- Appropriate protocol for such events as accepting tea at a home visit.

# Misconduct

Not all dual relationships can be avoided. Examples cited by Reamer (2000) include attending social and community events, joint affiliations and memberships, mutual friends and acquaintances.

Reamer (2000) states that not all dual relationships are boundary violations.

“A boundary violation that is considered misconduct occurs when a social worker engages in a dual relationship with a client or colleague that is exploitive, manipulative, deceptive, or coercive” (p. 122).

# Modeling

Many social work students are learning for the first time about the nature of professional social work relationships and the importance of setting and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. The student may be unclear about how professional relationships with clients differ from personal relationships. The field instructor needs to not only teach students about appropriate boundaries but to model them on a consistent basis.

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# Options in Supervision

\*Group

\*Individual

\*Team

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# Group Supervision

- When supervision is conducted in a group, it is very common for students to experience some anxiety regarding how they are being perceived by both their supervisor and their peers (Haynes, Corey & Moulton, 2003).
- In group supervision, students are able to freely share and evaluate their learning experiences. They can experience first hand what group cohesion and ownership feel like. A culture of sharing and confidentiality is established by the leader and carried out by the student group members. They learn to take risks in a supportive environment.

## Challenges in Group supervision

“Students arrive in group supervision with very different levels of professional competence, skills, learning needs, and expectations about group and group members” (Bogo, *et al.* 2004, p. 18)

Students who tend to complain, need to be right, give too much advice or are poor listeners will need constant redirection. Even though these students can be a challenge, the right supervisor can model how to handle these common group dynamics.

# Group Supervision

## Pros

- Multiple sources of feedback
- Time saving
- Allow the student to experience a broader array of cases and issues
- Emphasizes listening to others and learning from listening
- Idea generating
- Models group process
- Supportive

## Cons

- Students may tend to hold back and not share
- Competition or comparing with other students
- Anxiety provoking – exposure of self to many others not just the supervisor
- Demanding on the supervisor to manage the “group process”
- Does not replace the individual time that students need with the supervisor (so time saving may not always be a benefit)
- For the student it can be too much like having another class

# Team Supervision

Team supervision often involves a multi-disciplinary approach where the task supervisor may have a degree in an area other than social work. There is a primary field instructor with a MSW as required by the Council on Social Work Education. This type of supervision can be useful to the student due to the opportunity of being exposed to other disciplines.

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## Team Supervision Requires:

- Ongoing collaboration between the task supervisor and the MSW field instructor
- Regular meetings times for the student with task supervisor and separately with the field instructor
- Early establishment of the roles each will play with the student
- Clarity from the onset that the MSW will write the evaluation with input from the task supervisor.
- When there is any doubt or confusion about the success of the arrangement, contact the field liaison early on!

# The student's perspective on The best field instructors/supervisors

Haynes, Corey and Moulton (2003, pp. 278-281)

- Are tuned into the student's developmental stage and training needs
- Give or arrange for a thorough orientation of the agency, both the formal and informal operations
- Are flexible and open
- Empathic
- Ethical
- Challenging
- Are warm and supportive
- Provide feedback regularly
- Are dedicated to the student's training
- Have clinical expertise
- Don't feel that they have to know everything
- Encourage independence
- Model healthy personal and professional boundaries
- Avoid becoming the student's therapist

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# The student's perspective on The worst field instructors/supervisors

Haynes, Corey and Moulton (2003, pp. 278-281)

- Have minimal interest in the student
- Are unavailable
- Are inflexible
- Have limited clinical knowledge
- Are unreliable
- Are unhelpful and give inconsistent feedback
- Are punitive/critical
- Lack structure
- Are unethical
- Have a poor work ethic

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## In Summary

The student has a great deal to learn, and a significant amount of energy will go into this relationship. The professionals in the field office are available to you every step of the way to make this a rewarding and enjoyable experience for you and your student. Feel free to call with any questions, concerns or issues.

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