



Ethical Issues in Supervision

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Four areas where clinicians experience ethical challenges

Confidentiality

- clients with a tendency to hurt themselves
- clients who exhibit dangerous behaviors
- clients with emotional or health-related problems
- minors in insecure situations
- clients involved in illegal acts
- counselors in need of discipline
- counselor behavior that required a board report
- counselors under pressure from administration
- client cases of concerning guardianship
- multi-client cases (family couple)

Multiple relationships

- multi-client cases (family couple)
- gifts
- requests to divert to counseling
- requests by friends to provide counseling
- small rural communities where everyone knows each other
- lack of awareness of need for managing boundaries



Four areas where clinicians experience ethical challenges

Competence

- working outside area of expertise
- not understanding legal parameters of certain work areas
- Supervisees who bring questions outside area of expertise
- obligation to help supervisee be "well rounded"

Values

- when they are in common with societal norm - we are not aware of imposition
- when they are in opposition to social norm - we wonder what is right/wrong/ or we grapple with frustration
- modern values and traditional families????



Focus Questions



1.	What are the most critical ethical issues in supervision?
2.	What are the most important ethical responsibilities supervisors have toward supervisees and supervisee's clients?
3.	What kinds of training, coursework, and other professional experiences are essential for competent supervision?
4.	If you were a supervisee, how would you ideally like your supervisor to address multiple roles and relationships that might be a part of the supervisory process?
5.	As a supervisee, how have your relationships with supervisors changed over time? What lessons can you apply from these experiences when you assume a supervisory role?
6.	What kinds of activities that extend beyond the formal supervisory relationship do you think might be appropriate for a supervisor to engage in with a supervisee?



What are the most critical ethical issues in supervision?



Balance

- The rights of clients
- The rights & responsibilities of supervisees
- The responsibilities of supervisors to supervisees and supervisee's clients



Competence

- Competence of supervisor
- Competence of supervisee



Multiple Roles and Relationships

- Role conflicts
- Avoiding Dual relationships



What are the most important ethical responsibilities supervisors have toward supervisees and supervisee's clients?

Before supervising, obtain training & education to ensure competence

Assess supervisee's competence and training needs at beginning of relationship

Treat supervisee with respect and provide timely and meaningful feedback

Limit one's clinical practice & supervision to one's area of competence

Promote ethical practice of supervisee by drawing attention to ethical issues. Model ethical practice & decision making





ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

1. Identify the Problem
2. Identify Potential Issues Involved
3. Review Relevant Ethics Codes
4. Know Applicable Laws & Regulations
5. Obtain Consultation
6. Consider Possible and Probable Courses of Action
7. Enumerate the Consequences of Various Decisions
8. Decide the Best Course of Action





ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

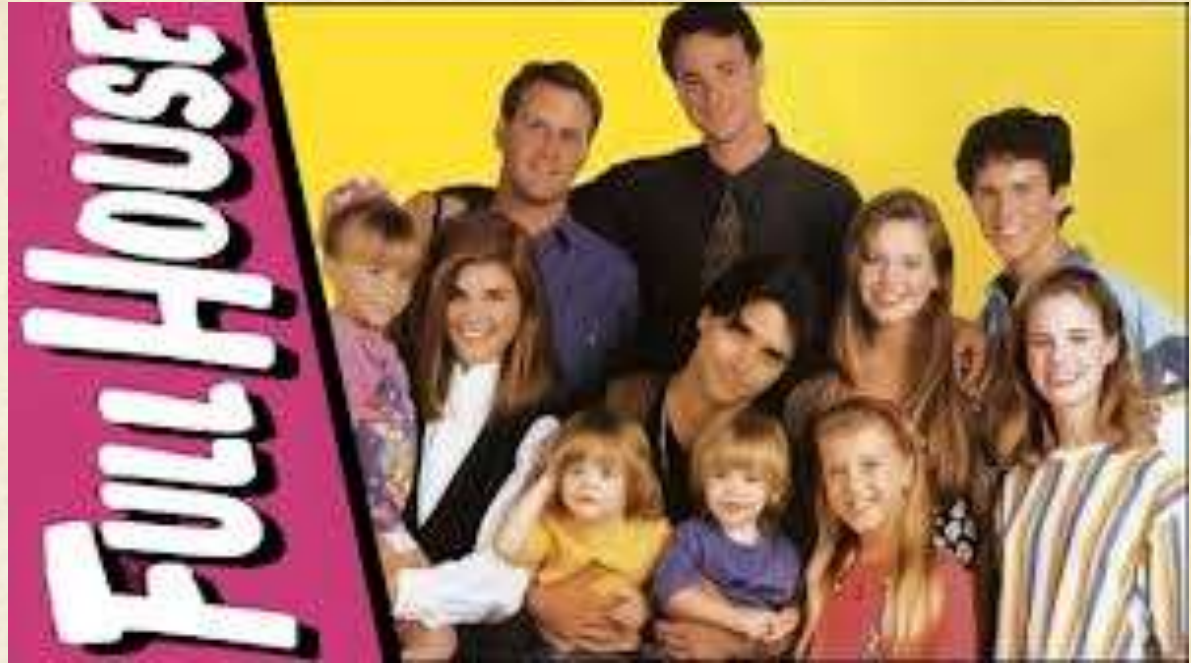
RESOURCES FOR CODE OF ETHICS

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

http://www.acjs.org/pubs/167_671_2922.cfm



ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FULL HOUSE STYLE



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxRpGMeJPs8>





What kinds of training, coursework, and other professional experiences are essential for competent supervision?

Competent Supervisors...

6. Must have a broad knowledge of laws, ethics, and professional regulations that may apply in a variety of situations that could arise in supervision
7. Stay focused on the fact that a primary goal of supervision to monitor clinical services so that the welfare of the client is protected
8. Are willing to serve an evaluative function with supervisees and provide feedback about their performance on a regular basis
9. Document supervision activities in a timely and accurate fashion
10. Empower supervisees. Supervisors assist supervisees at both problem solving current situations and developing a problem solving approach that they can apply to nearly any clinical situation long after the supervision has ended.





Incompetent or Impaired Supervisors

- Engage in exploitive or harmful dual relationships with supervisees
- Sexual contact with supervisees
- Misuse of power
- Extreme burnout
- Makes poor decisions due to inexperience
- Creates a negative experience for supervisee



Monitoring Trainee Competence

SUPERVISORS have a responsibility to recognize, monitor, and take action with incompetent or impaired supervisees.

Dufrene & Henderson (2009) designed a framework for remediation with counseling trainees. This table describes areas in which to monitor supervisee's competence



Professionalism	Counseling Skills	Documentation
Interpersonal Demeanor 1. Receptive to feedback from supervisor. 2. Open to self examination. 3. Exhibits appropriate boundaries with clients, peers, colleagues, supervisors, and faculty.	1. Demonstrates basic counseling skills. 2. Consults with other professionals and coordinates services related to clients. 3. Demonstrates advanced counseling skills.	1. Completes and submits application for clinical work. 2. Completes and submits logs on time. 3. Completes and submits evaluations on time.
Procedural Compliance 1. Knowledgeable of site and university rules and procedures. 2. Attends supervision on time weekly. 3. Participates in required staffing and meetings.	4. Demonstrates his or her theoretical orientation. 5. Able to conceptualize client cases	4. Completes and submits audio/video tapes of counseling sessions. 5. Takes notes during supervision. 6. Writes client case notes.
Professional Identity 1. Identifies appropriate counselor roles in specialty area. 2. Demonstrates ethical behavior.		

Managing Multiple Roles and Relationships

- Multiple roles and relationships cannot always be avoided. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to manage them in ethical and appropriate ways.

- The bottom line is to avoid multiple relationships that could impair the supervisor's objectivity, competence, effectiveness or will harm the supervisee.
- Avoid multiple role relationships that involve an abuse of power.

- A *boundary crossing* is a departure from standard practice that could potentially benefit the client or supervisee. A *boundary violation* is a serious breach that causes harm to the client or supervisee.

- It is during the practicum and internship experience that many students will actually get to grapple with boundary issues for the first time.

- Some writers have said that avoiding certain multiple relationships could be harmful to some clients and that therapists need to use their professional judgment.



Special Situations

• MENTORING

- If a supervisory relationship also takes on a mentor-mentee relationship, the critical point is that the person with the greater power initiates a discussion about this type of collaborative project.
- To be a true mentor and allow a supervisee to know you outside of your authority role may leave you feeling vulnerable.



Special Situations

• DOCTORAL AND MASTER'S STUDENTS

- In counselor education programs, doctoral students often are in roles with master's level students in which they hold a position of authority.
- These multiple relationships should not be discouraged, but there needs to be an open discussion about keeping watch for boundary violations.

• SOCIALIZING

- However minor the social situation may seem, supervisors still need to think about the potential issues that could surface and how attending a social function might either enhance or inhibit the professional relationship.



More Special Situations

• SEXUAL ATTRACTION

- The attraction isn't the problem. It is what individuals do with the attraction that determines if it is appropriate or inappropriate.
- It is the supervisor's responsibility to create a safe learning environment for supervisees.
- If you find yourself sexually attracted to a supervisee, you should examine your feelings and consider that sexual harassment could be a real issue for you. You need to deal with this in your own therapy and supervision.
- *Preoccupation with clients is problematic, while transient sexual feelings are normal.*
- Sexual feelings for clients are common among students as well as professional practitioners. It is crucial for trainees acknowledge these feelings to themselves and to their supervisors and take steps to deal effectively with them.
- It is important to normalize the feelings of attraction and distinguish them from feelings of sexual misconduct.





And More Special Situations

• SEXUAL INTIMACIES

- Although multiple relationships are common in university settings, sex between students and their professors and supervisors is forbidden by ethical standards.
- *It results in a loss of objectivity and an abuse of power.*
- Additionally, it is poor modeling for supervisees and their relationships with clients.
- If a problem does arise, the supervisor has the responsibility to take steps to resolve them in an ethical manner.
- **Bottom line: If you want to practice ethically, don't do it.**
- Any form of sexual intimacy between supervisees and their clients is inappropriate and unethical.
- The supervisor has a legal and ethical obligation to do everything possible to intervene immediately should sex between the supervisee and the client occurs.



Changing Roles and Relationships

- **Students and supervisees can become valued colleagues**
 - **It is important to have open discussions to sort out any issues that may arise.**



References

Corey, G., Haynes, R., Moulton, P., & Muratori, M. (2010). *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Dufrene, R. L., & Henderson, K. L. (2009). A framework for remediation plans for counseling trainees in G.R. Walz, J.C. Bleuer & R. K. Yep (Eds.), *Compelling counseling interventions: VISTAS 2009* (pp 149-159). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

