

Positive Psychology Meets Clinical Supervision: A Strengths- Based Focus on Supervision

Kevin P. Feisthamel, Ph.D., PCC-S, NCC
Hiram College
Kara Kaelber, Ph.D., PCC-S
Malone University
Annaleise Lessick, B.S.
Kent State University

1

Basics of Supervision

- According to Edwards (2013), supervisors must understand and utilize 10 executive skills:
 1. Multicultural competencies
 2. Domains of a supervisor
 3. Ethics
 4. Developmental stages of a clinician
 5. Isomorphs and parallel processes
 6. Boundary issues
 7. Interpersonal relationship skills
 8. Conflict Resolution
 9. Enhancement of self-efficacy
 10. Session management

Supervision Models

- Psychotherapy-based
 - Psychodynamic
 - Feminist
 - Cognitive-behavioral
 - Person-centered
- Developmental
 - Integrated Developmental model
- Integrative
 - Bernard's discrimination model
 - Systems approach

Foundations of Positive Psychology

- Positive Psychology is the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues (Wade & Jones, 2015)
- Misperception of positive psychology is that it is simply 'looking at the bright side' rather than amplify strengths and successes to find a life balance (Wade & Jones, 2015).
- Focus shift of things that are negative and causes pain to factors and experiences that energize and pull people forward (Kauffman, 2006).

Foundations of Positive Psychology

- Martin Seligman's 1998 presidential address to the American Psychological Association imploring the field to study success and well-being not just pathology and disease.
- Wade & Jones (2015) states that positive psychology is founded upon three pillars:
 - Positive subjective experience or emotion
 - Positive traits such as strengths, virtues and abilities
 - Positive institutions
- Thus, the focus of well-being: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement

Foundations of Positive Psychology

- Philosophers Plato and Aristotle in the West to Confucius and Lao-Tzu in the East
- Religious figures including Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Thomas Aquinas also modelled and discussed well-being and the good life
- William James (1902) wrote about "healthy mindedness"
- Clifford Beers (1908) published *A Mind That Found Itself*, focusing on resiliency and strengths
- Humanistic Psychology

Foundations of Positive Psychology

- Well-being versus Happiness
- Happiness refers to an appraisal of pleasant or unpleasant feelings in one's immediate experience
- Well-being refers to a long term assessment of life satisfaction (Wade & Jones, 2015)
- Happiness = Genetics + Circumstances + Actions (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005)
- Well-being = Pleasure + Meaning + Engagement + Relationships + Accomplishments (Seligman, 2003)

Positive Psychology within Supervision

- Howard (2008) suggests that one of the key functions of clinical supervision is the restoration of well-being, where supervisor attends to the emotional effects of the work and the well-being of the supervisee
- Howard (2008) also discusses narrative supervision as an example of a positive-psychology based supervision intervention.

A Strength-Based Approach

What do therapists/supervisees want from supervision?
Thomas (1996) outlines six needs:

1. Relationships based on mutual respect
2. Collegial supervisors versus 'guru'
3. Supervision and evaluation should be both a cooperative experience based on goals and change
4. Recognition that supervisee is competent, especially given a tendency to view themselves in an overly critical light
5. Tell supervisee what they are doing right: Affirm versus Power

Best Practices- Exercises

- Taking in the Good Exercise
- Savoring the Positive Moment Exercise
- The Hope Chest Technique
- Empowering Thoughts Toolkit
- A Vision Board for Strengths, Goals and Plans
- Strength Chart
- Wheel of Life Exercise

(Jones-Smith, 2014)

Case Studies

- Case Study # 1
- Case Study # 2
- Case Study # 3


Live Role Play Session

Live Role Play Session

- Utilizing a strengths-based approach within clinical supervision

Questions

- Questions?



THANK YOU!
