Co-supervision of Co-learners
Directing Co-counseling

KATIE BRAMMER MS LMHC (NM), MS LPC (MO)
MBRAMMER@UNM.EDU
“The goal of supervision is to produce more competent counselors”

BERNARD (1979, P. 61)
DEFINITIONS

Co-supervision: two or more individuals sharing responsibility of guiding a trainee through training experience.

Co-learners: two or more trainees who are learning the counseling process, share the same experience and knowledge, have accepted a mode of counseling together, and are under supervision.

Co-counseling: a term used in the field of counseling instead of co-therapy to define the use of two or more counselors working together to provide therapeutic procedures/techniques to an individual, couple, family, or group.
## Dynamics

### Co-supervision
- At least one expert in the dynamic
- “academic relay team” (Paul, Olson, & Gul, 2014, p. 3)
- Alternate responsibilities
- Training for both novice counselors and supervisors
- Potential buffer between the trainee and supervisor
- A rescuer to assist with working through issues

### Co-counseling
- TX that requires the counselor to relate to both the client(s) and their peers or co-counselors
- Recognizes different strengths
- Different interpretations of the same event unfolding into the counseling session

### Co-learning
- **Objectives:**
  - learning skill set
  - treating clients
- Trainee-trainee dyad
- Additional support from peers
- Additional learning opportunities with peers
Co-supervision of Co-learners directing Co-counseling

Pros
- Potential for use in a Counselor Education training clinic
- Students
  - Increased support
  - Increased access to advice
  - Diverse learning styles and perspectives
- Supervisors
  - Assistance with problem-solving
  - Decreased workload
- Universities and Agencies
  - Maximize learning potential and educational opportunities
  - Exposure to empirically supported TX
  - Increased efficacy of co-learners

Cons
- Atypical dynamic-not researched
- Advice giving among supervisors can conflict
- Lack of transparency
- Balancing tasks and maintenance roles
- Deficiencies in sharing the supervisory role equally
- Compound supervisee games (e.g. two against one, competition among co-learners or supervisors, siding up, etc.)
- Lacking trust and communication
Structured Peer Group Supervision (SPGS)

- Appears to be a good fit for co-supervision of co-learners directing co-counseling
- Systematic approach to supervision developed to decrease the drawbacks of peer supervision
- Small groups (3-6 co-learners)
- Goals
  - Co-learners included in process of co-supervision
  - Help co-learners stay attentive to evidence-based practices in co-counseling
  - Improve development of cognitive counseling skills
  - Educate students to self-reflect and self-monitor
Co-Supervisors Roles in SPGS

- Aware of developmental levels of all co-learners
- Allow everyone to express their thoughts and feelings
- Provide feedback to each participant about their interactions within the group
**SPGS Step-by-Step process**

**Step-by-step Process:**

- **Step 1:** Counselor trainees identify and verbalize questions about a specific client, show video, and request feedback.
- **Step 2:** Trainee’s peers either select or are given roles, perspectives, or tasks while reviewing segments of the sessions.
- **Step 3:** The trainee shows peers a preselected segment of the session.
- **Step 4:** Peers provide feedback about the segment using roles, perspectives, or tasks acknowledging questions that the trainee originally specified in step one.
Potential Benefits of SPGS in Co-supervision of Co-learners directing Co-counseling

- Assigned roles (e.g. lawyer, ethics committee, supervisor in teaching, counseling, or consultation mode, etc.) and role-playing allows for enhanced learning methods
- Lower cost and required availability
- Provide innovative diverse ideas for working difficult cases
- Multicultural differences
- Co-learners are peer supervisors who:
  - Offer nonevaluative feedback and innovative ideas for working with difficult clients
  - Provide a forum for discussion of ethical and legal obligations
  - Benefits of co-supervisors who apply the SPGS approach with co-counseling co-learners ensure
Potential Disadvantages of SPGS in Co-supervision of Co-learners directing Co-counseling

- Though Borders (1991) attempted to decrease weaknesses within peer supervision models there is potential for:
  - Inconsistent attendance
  - Inconsistent leadership
  - Overly supportive feedback that is not constructive
  - Co-learners may not be in agreement
  - Communication issues
  - Lack of knowledge, skills, and practice
That's all Folks!

Questions/Comments
References


