



Advanced Issues in Supervision

*Strengths-based, culturally competent
supervision based on the values of the
system of care*

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Agenda

Breaks will be as needed

- 9:00** *Warm-up exercises and Overview of Supervisor Role in Shaping Staff and Agency Outcomes, Initial Self-assessment and Exercises on Supervision.*
- 10:00** *Supervisor as Catalyst for Change in an Agency and a Community
Sheila Part 1- Pairs Exercise and Sheila 2 - Deficit Based Supervision*
- 11:00** *Strengths and Culture Discovery
Supervisor as Motivator*
- 1:00** *Role of Supervisor in Integration: Developing Skills and Tasks, including Issues of Co-occurring disorders and implications for supervision.*
- 2:00** *Pairs Role Plays
Sheila Part 3- Pairs Exercise, Large Group Debriefing*
- 2:30** *Clinically focused skill set-based Coaching 101: Individual, Small Group, and In-vivo Coaching*
- 3:30** *Sheila 4 : Skill and task definition, Changing how Supervision was done with Sheila*
- 4:15** *Debriefing*

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Think of your worst and best supervisor. What did they do that made them your worst and best? How did their supervision affect your performance in a positive and negative way?



Individual Questions

Write your response below after viewing the Powerpoint slides on each

- 1. How did you become a supervisor?**
- 2. What is your primary method of supervision?**
- 3. What is your primary strength as a supervisor?**
- 4. What is your primary need as a supervisor?**
- 5. What is the culture of your agency/school in the area of supervision?**

Supervision Activity On a Challenging Staff Situation

Situation Description. Each of you is the supervisor of children's community-based services for a small non-profit human services agency. You have an employee whom you are concerned about. Her name is Sheila Smith. Sheila has a Master's degree in social work, is 33 years old, and prior to going back to school to obtain her MSW, worked as a residential treatment aide and then unit supervisor at the same facility. Sheila has now worked for your agency for over two years. Her current position is a family therapist, working with children who have experienced trauma as a result of abuse and neglect.

Some information about Sheila you would have known if you were her supervisor: She is bi-racial (African-Canadian and Latino), she has a dynamic, enthusiastic personality, and is well liked by all other staff. She has enormous personal skills in getting to know families, and has led your staff in learning about the effects of trauma on young children. You and she have had a love-hate relationship. On one hand, you admire her skills and her obvious charisma, and all the agency has benefited from her presence. On the other hand, she seems to have a strong passive-aggressive attitude toward supervision, does not like any corrections about her work style, and has criticized you behind your back to other younger and less experienced staff. For example, you are required by the CEO of the agency to keep accurate billing logs for all staff who are performing potentially billable work. While most staff average 90% plus compliance and accuracy with the staff, she does not turn in the logs on time, is angry about having to record her hours, and when she does turn the logs in, you have had to audit them extensively due to the many errors. This last month, when you met with her and pressed her about getting her billing logs in, she sat passively, glared at you, and later told other staff that you were anal retentive. You know from other staff that she has aspirations about being a supervisor and has told staff that her goal is to run her own agency by the time she is 40 years old.

You are conflicted and frustrated about what to do. You are an experienced supervisor who has tried many things to improve her performance. You have taken her out for coffee and just talked about kids and family. You have helped her get advanced training on trauma issues and mentored her into writing a paper on trauma and child welfare to present at a local conference. You have asked her what she needed to get the paperwork done. As a result, you temporarily backed off two of her expected billable hours. This worked better, but her improved performance lasted only three weeks.

Activity One: Deficit-Based Supervision (Sheila 2A) 10-15 Minutes

As was mentioned in the introduction to this workshop, few supervisors in human services are ever trained to use strengths-based, culturally competent supervision techniques. As a result, supervisors may use deficit driven supervision techniques where our job is to point out Sheila's fault (i.e, assess and diagnose) and propose a solution to fix the problem. With Sheila, this strategy is not working. She seems to be energized by the conflict between the supervisor and herself.

In large group, we will list out at least four more deficit based statements and prescribed solutions that a supervisor might have said to Sheila to try to improve her work.

Deficit-Based Supervision Statements and Questions:

1. "Your non-compliance with the billing logs is causing our agency to lose money. If we lose money, we will have to lay off staff - I need you to start doing your billing logs better"

2.

3.

4.

5.

We will debrief this activity with at least the following questions:

1. Could you see yourself making these statements in similar situations?
2. Do upper level administrators encourage you to take a deficit-based approach to intervening with staff?
3. What are the typical outcomes of deficit-based supervision in these situations?

Activity Two: Typical Supervision Plan (Sheila 2B) **(Time: 20-25 minutes)**

Pairs Exercise: In pairs, discuss the situation, and come up with a strategy that represents what would actually happen to Sheila if she worked where you work. What are you going to do? Promote her? Begin disciplinary procedures and documentation? Tolerate the situation? Talk to your Human Resources staff?

We want to get a sense of typical supervisory practice in your agencies.

Then, develop several goals you would have for Sheila and be prepared to share this with the other participants in a large group discussion.

Supervisor as Strengths-based, Culturally Competent Motivator of Staff

Another important role of the supervisor is motivating his or her staff to achieve professional, system/agency, quality and outcome goals. Strengths-based supervision is an essential tool of the supervisor as staff motivator. Strengths-based supervision and performance evaluation discovers staff strengths and personal culture, seeks to find ways to fit job function to employee strengths and culture, and mobilizes strengths and culture in action plans to target areas of performance need. Supervisors who successfully motivate their staff cultivate a work culture that celebrates successes, uses quality and outcome data to guide continuous quality improvement processes, and fosters a work team that is support oriented and interdependent.

- A. Supervisor provides proactive strength-based supervision during individual sessions with each employee each week
- B. Supervisor provides proactive strength-based supervision during group sessions with all employees each week
- C. Supervisor models wraparound values in personal work
- D. Supervisor encourages and supports staff to improve child and family outcomes
- E. Supervisor encourages and supports staff to complete work assignments
- F. Supervisor sets goals for staff and monitors progress
- G. Supervisor gives consistent feedback on quality of work
- H. Supervisor celebrates successes with staff on a consistent basis
- I. Supervisor identifies and builds on the strengths of employees

Doing Strengths and Culture Discovery with Staff.

Document or Not? We suggest that each agency begin a systematic process of performing strengths and culture discovery with all staff who are supervised. This is built on the same process used in high fidelity wraparound. You will have consult with your directors and with human resources about whether or not these should be verbal or written down. Some agencies are concerned about documenting strengths if there is a chance of labor lawsuits in the future around an employee. In practice, VVDB has never seen this occur, but it is a question for your director and the human resources staff, and possibly agency attorneys if available.

Starting the Discoveries with Staff. If you decide to start strengths and culture discovery with staff, it is important to think through how you will introduce this change in your supervisory practice. We recommend that you let the staff know that it is important to you that you model the same behaviors of being strengths-based and culturally competent that they are asked to do with families. Be open about having sought out and completed training in this area. Schedule individual times with staff to begin this process.



DVD Scene 12 on Strengths-Based Supervision

Your trainer will show the scene twice. On a sheet of blank paper, list out the skills you saw the supervisor exhibiting. Try and be specific, and discuss them with your training partner. Ask yourself – do I do anything similar to this in my own supervision?

Activity Three: Strengths and Culture Discovery With Staff (Sheila 3) 35 minutes

After the presentation of the Power Point slides in this area, and watching the trainer role play, we are going to explore how to shift supervision style to a strengths-based, culturally competent style. Of course, many of you already do some or most of this type of supervision, and this section will be a review.

With families, we teach staff to assess strengths and culture so that teams can use that information in planning. This is the same with staff and strengths and culture discovery – we find out the information so that we can make our supervision strengths-based and culturally competent and in this situation, tailor supervision to the unique person that Sheila is.

In Pairs. There are twelve work-related strengths and culture questions listed below that were developed by a previous class of supervisors from another agency. With your training partner, look at the questions and choose at least seven that as Sheila’s supervisor, you would ask her to get information on which to develop a strengths-based plan.

Instructions: Choose roles -- one member of each pair will be a supervisor and the other is Sheila. Have the “supervisor” in each pair spend 15 minutes doing a strengths and culture discovery. Start by explaining to Sheila why you are having this conversation, knowing that she may be suspicious and reticent to share information. Remember to keep the interview legal in terms of labor laws – you don’t have any right to ask personal questions that go outside of the work environment. **In particular, keep culture related questions to work culture and culture that relates to the job. Sheila’s personal life is none of your business.**

However, you (the Supervisor) can share elements of your own personal life and how it relates to culture. Feel free to ad lib any information about Sheila that you don’t have in written form. Remember to let Sheila know why you are doing this discovery – be open and honest about what you are doing, and that your goal is to have improved work skills in the goal areas.

In this strengths and culture discovery, the participant in the Supervisor Role should use the sample questions and ask them one at a time and take notes on the answers. You may also ad-lib questions. The participant in the Sheila role should feel free to ad-lib answers.

Sample Strengths and Culture Questions for Employees

1. What kinds of interests and hobbies do you have that relate to your work, if any?

2. What are you most proud of in your work history?
3. What would your best friend say are your strengths as a staff person?
4. When do you feel creative at work and what do you do?
5. What trait, if any, do you have from childhood that you still have today that you are proud of, and that has an effect on your work skills?
6. Where did you learn your work ethic?
7. Is there a central thing you can rely on to get yourself out of a jam when at work?
8. What do you think your strengths as a staff in _____ position are?
9. What did you like about your last job?
10. Describe a challenging situation in another job and how did you handle it?
11. What is the most exciting thing you have ever done in a work setting?
12. Where do you want to be in terms of work in 5 to 10 years? What do you want to be doing?

We will debrief the activity using at least the following questions:

- How did it feel to have a supervisor doing the strengths and culture discovery? What suggestions do the “Sheila’s” have for the process?
- How did it feel for the supervisor to do the strengths and culture discovery? What suggestions do the “supervisors” have for the process?

Brief Coaching Instructions for Supervisors

Overview. Training is used to orient individuals or groups of staff to the concepts and philosophy of wraparound and systems of care. Training is an important and vital part of moving toward staff who are competent at their jobs. However, training by itself rarely results in strong skill acquisition. This requires coaching – the hands on teaching of skills in a practice environment. For example, few of us, if any, learned to drive from books or films only, someone (normally terrified parents) took us out on the road and helped us through our first scary drives. During this time, we were not very good at driving, but every time we went out, we got better at it. Coaching is how practice evolves to the best it can be, following national standards for the field.

The next question is “Who should be the coach?”. Vroon VanDenBerg, LLP has experimented with several models of coaching, from peer coaching, use of outside expert coaches, use of internal agency specialist coaches, and use of supervisors as coaches. The latter model, use of supervisors as coaches, is the model which seems to work the best. One of the early lessons in this model of coaching was never to assume that the supervisor actually has the desired skills themselves. Often, a supervisor needs coached prior to their becoming coaches. Some communities call the persons who do overall coaching of supervisors “Super Coaches” or Coaching Trainers. These individuals are often trained and coached by outside experts.

Supervisor techniques of coaching. Coaching can take many forms. It can be formally structured, as in role plays managed by the supervisor, or informal, such as a spontaneous conversation about a skill between a supervisor and a staff person. In general, however, coaching takes three overall formats:

1. **Group coaching.** In this model, a supervisor uses a 15 to 60 minute time period to help their entire staff brush up on their skills. Typically, the supervisor would be collecting information on fidelity and would use the group coaching format to address a deficit or need in this area. Group coaching takes many forms, but often uses role play as a learning format. Role play is often the best way to create cognitive dissonance in the learner’s mind – which leads to learning. For some staff, group format learning may mean that they are not engaged in the learning process. A good role play will involve active participation by all staff. The role play should be fun, targeted to skills, and be brief.

Supervisors use group coaching as a way to create an environment and staff culture around learning together. Traditionally, staff presented family situations in a “Staffing” model, during staffing times. In supervisor driven coaching, family situations are presented in similar fashion, but the supervisor uses presentation to highlight key staff skill sets, and to go over products done by staff, such as completed strengths, needs, and culture discoveries. Supervisors

can use group coaching to model key skills, to expose new staff to family perspectives, and above all, to be active teachers of their staff. Role play is one of the most effective teaching techniques, and will involve significant supervisor preparation.

2. **Individual or paired coaching.** In this model, the supervisor works one on one with a staff person, or uses pairs of staff to set up mutual support for learning high fidelity wraparound. This type of coaching takes many formats. For example, a supervisor may coach a single new staff person in strengths, needs and culture discovery through asking them to perform a discovery on the supervisor. The staff would have had general training on this skill, but would have to be coached to get the discovery up to high standards. Or, using the same example, the supervisor may pair the new staff with an experienced staff person, and send them off to do the same task, and ask them to later demonstrate the skill to the supervisor.
3. **In-vivo or live coaching.** In this model, the supervisor accompanies the staff to the family environment (or other environment which the staff work in) and coaches live in the home or other setting. The first step of this method is to inform the family at intake about the agency policy of supervisors doing live coaching. The family knows that staff need to learn, and rarely objects to the presence of the supervisor. If they do object, use a family who approves the use of this type of coaching. In this type of coaching, a supervisor directly engages in live feedback through offering suggestions, reminding staff of skill sets, and asking the family questions. The supervisor may step into the live interaction and model the skill, or may silently observe the skill being performed and later comment on it. This type of coaching promotes staff and family partnership.

Supervisor as System of Care Catalyst: Cross-System Supervisor and Integration Specialist

This supervisory role includes the development and maintenance of mechanisms of connection with supervisors from other child serving systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice and education. The supervisor uses these opportunities for connection to engage the supervisors from other systems, discover their strengths and needs, identify opportunities to share resources, and collaboratively plan ways to address service system needs. The supervisor also provides leadership in the development and implementation of processes to monitor quality and outcomes across-systems. Cross training is provided as a means to foster culturally competent cross-system relationships.

- A. Supervisor develops and nurtures partnerships with other child serving systems supervisors

- B. Supervisor develops and nurtures partnerships with leaders of natural supports in community
- C. Supervisor works to develop and maintain smooth transitions with other system partners
- D. Supervisor develops and nurtures effective communication among system partners
- E. Supervisor supports other agencies needs and share resources to meet family needs
- F. Supervisor develops joint efforts across agencies and organizations to support children and families
- G. Supervisor develops and implements cross systems quality improvement
- H. Supervisor works with system partners to develop cross system training priorities
- I. Supervisor recognizes and builds on the strengths of system partners



DVD Scene 16 on Respecting our System Partners
Watch this scene and look for Supervisory Skills

Collaboration and Integration with System Partners

Top ten tips for how supervisors can improve collaboration and integration

1. Check for your own understanding of the societal mandates of the other system involved. Have you genuinely taken the time to get to know the systems involved? Do they know your system? Do you know the first names of several of their system supervisors?
2. Do a check with your staff for understanding of societal mandates by your staff of the other system. Key indicators that they understand the other system's societal mandates: their plan includes the other side's priority; and the plan includes the other side in development and in implementation.

3. Do a check on your own organization's behavior around implementing strengths-based discussions of the other systems. Do you commonly hear comments that support collaborative approaches or do you hear comments that discourage collaboration or even are sarcastic about other systems? Is your "agency culture" collaborative?
4. Do an informal "drop in" visit to the other system to discuss the collaborative barriers.
5. Arrange for a dual system meeting to discuss the collaborative barrier. As you do this, remember to start with common values and goals. Stress your need to learn about the other systems.
6. When barriers have not been able to be addressed even with lots of effort, you may together ask a third system partner not involved with the collaborative barrier to join the discussion and give neutral input.
7. When agency mandates and priorities are not being met, ask parents in both systems to manage a mediation process (you may have to train the parents in the basic steps of mediation).
8. To get a fresh idea, and improve overall community support and involvement, ask an informal system representative like a business leader to look the situation over and give input and recommendations.
9. Together with the other system, take a trip to a site where an element of collaboration has been successfully addressed, and learn from them.
10. In a meeting with another system, develop consensus on what will happen to children and families if a collaboration barrier is not solved, and what will happen if it is solved.

Development of Skills or Tasks for Staff

Defined Skills and Tasks. One of the key skills of an experienced supervisor is in development of skill and task definition for the jobs that we ask staff to perform. Almost every other field defines jobs to finite details and then trains staff to those skills or tasks. For example, McDonald's Corporation has elaborate skill descriptions for each task in the restaurant. McDonalds has quality assurance that has led to rapid world wide growth. This quality assurance is based on the idea that staff can be taught key skills, checked off on their competency, and can be monitored for ongoing performance of these tasks. However, in human services, we rarely define jobs beyond general job descriptions. Any real detail is most often given in policy enforcement or in agency regulations.

We think that it is essential that supervisors move their supervision style from primarily relationship based supervision to primarily skill based supervision. Of course it is important for supervisors to have good people skills, but we are really there to see that the mission of the agency is accomplished, and to break that mission down into discrete skills.

For example, VVDB has taken the Phases and Activities of High Fidelity Wraparound from the National Wraparound Initiative and broken these down into 93 separate skills or tasks. A wraparound supervisor must teach these skills, and coach the skills, and check the staff off when they learn the skills. The supervisor needs to monitor the ongoing “drift” of skills over time to ensure that fidelity to the skills is constant.

Individualization of Skills. Initially, some wraparound pioneers were reluctant to define skills of the job of wraparound facilitator, due to worry that it might take away from the unique individualization of the task of facilitation. However, once the core 93 skills are learned, facilitators can then learn the “art” of wraparound. If staff learn the “art” first, we risk key essential steps such as crisis planning being left out of practice. We get the skills accomplished first, then enhance practice through learning the subtle parts of the jobs of wraparound

Activity Four: Communication Skills for Sheila Sheila 4 (30 minutes)

Pairs Activity. We will do the following activity in pairs.

Instructions: Following the Powerpoint slides on skill or task development, we will work in pairs to develop at least eight skills that Sheila needs to learn to improve her communication with her supervisor. These skills should be reciprocal, with the supervisor committing to exhibiting the same positive communication skills. List out at least five key skills. Make sure they are discrete actions, not sets of actions or tasks.

Development of Quarterly Staff Improvement Plans

One of the most powerful tools a supervisor has is the development of quarterly staff improvement plans. Many agencies have annual evaluations – the quarterly improvement plan is not the same thing. The quarterly plan is based on three major ideas:

1. Staff often have ideas of their own about what they would like to improve about their own performance.
2. Supervisors often have ideas about what staff need to do to improve their own performance.

3. Staff, given the opportunity, often wish to pursue advanced training or other issues. These can be short or long term issues.

These three ideas form the basis of the development of the quarterly plan. The planning session is often done in less than 15 minutes, and is based on these three ideas.

- First, the supervisory asks the staff person if they have targeted a skill area to improve in. If they have, the supervisor discusses the skill, assesses staff strengths and culture in the skill area, brainstorms with the staff, and with the staff, individualizes a solution to assist in skill improvement.
- Next, the supervisor presents an area of skill that can be addressed in the next 90 days. This can be an area of existing skill or new skills. The supervisor discusses the skill, and follows the same pattern as with the first step.
- Finally, the supervisor asks the staff if they have any short term or long term goals for themselves. The issue is discussed, and the pattern of the first two steps is followed.

Activity Five: Development of a Quarterly Staff Development Plan 45-50 minutes

This is a pairs activity.

1. One of you is a supervisor, and one is a staff person. Prior to the role play, the supervisor should discuss an area of skill that the person in the staff role would like to improve, and an area of professional growth that they would like to pursue, or you may adlib as you wish. The supervisor should choose an area of skill that they as supervisor would like to see improvement in (hint - ask the staff what their supervisor might say!).
2. In role play format, take 15 minutes and go through the three steps.
3. Switch roles and repeat the exercise.

WE WILL EVALUATE THE TRAINING IN LARGE GROUP. THANK YOU!!!