

## From Client to Staff: Navigating the Clinical Supervision Process

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## From Client to Staff

- High prevalence in our field of persons who go through treatment then wanting to become addiction counselors
- Not an easy or a simple transition
- First of all - Is it even ethical?
  - Dual Relationships
  - Learning only one methodology

## Why do you want to do this?

- Often, when a person is in early recovery they naturally question their life and the meaning of their life
- This can include occupation
- Or, on a deeper level, they may never have been developmentally able to establish an identity, so this identity becomes very appealing to them
- Still trying to work out Family of Origin issues

## Why do you want to do this?

- A "romantic" or fantasized idea about what it means to be a counselor
- They believe the counselor saved their life and they see it as honorable work
- Belief that it will keep them sober because they will be constantly working a Step 12
- Urgency to help others
- Don't know what else to do

## Why do you want to do this?

- If any of the above reasons are why they're getting into the field, then they are doing it to get their own needs met
- It doesn't mean they can't enter the field, it just means they need lots of supervision and possibly therapy
- Unresolved issues can lead to poor choices, which can lead to boundary violations, which can lead to ethical violations

## Why do you want to do this?

- As Clinical Supervisors, we need to help them explore why they want to do this
- Explore possible issues that might get triggered
- Warnings about the field
  - It will bring up every issue you've got
  - Boundaries against traumatization

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- When a client moves into a staff position there is a shift in the person's role, duties, and expectations
- If the change is not managed, the new staff may overidentify with the clients which would cause boundary issues
- Or, they may think they know more than they do because they've been a client

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- The new staff know how to be a client and can draw on that experience
- Being a staff member means a shift from the role of client to the role of staff
- From the clients as peer group to the staff as peer group
- This is a completely different culture with different expectations

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- From:
  - Being served to serving
  - Rule follower to rule enforcer
  - Student to colleague
  - Using the staff as container of your process to being the container of the process
  - From having staff "heroes" to being one

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- **Not:**
  - Peer
  - Buddy
  - Sponsor
  - Drill Sergeant
  - Guru
  - Sibling

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- They have likely done a lot of work already, but this is a whole new level
- They don't know yet what they don't know
- Help them explore issues that may directly impact the client relationship
- *Counselors can't counsel from beyond whom they have become (Carl Rogers)*

### Shifts in thinking and behavior

- Sometimes, when they make the shift to staff they can be very self-deprecating
  - In part, I think because they feel inadequate with the "professionals"
  - Don't allow it!
  - This type of talk and belief will undermine their development and authority as a counselor
  - An opportunity to teach self-care

## Shifts in thinking and behavior

- Two areas that specifically need to shift:
  - Competence
    - Knowledge and Skills
  - Persona
    - Attitude and Behavior

## Competence

- Unconscious Incompetence
  - I don't know what I don't know
- Conscious Incompetence
  - I know what I don't know
- Conscious Competence
  - I do what I know but have to think about it
- Unconscious Competence
  - I can do it without thinking

## Competence

- Professionals know their trade
- Professionals are expected to maintain a high level of knowledge and expertise
- Develop a solid theoretical base
- Learn as many different theories and techniques as you can
- Keep your knowledge up to date
- Competence builds confidence

## Persona

- A professional sees beyond themselves
- Altruistic, benefits others
- Clients come first
- Thinks about long-term implications
- Considers the consequences of behavior
- Sense of ownership and pride in their work
- Takes responsibility

## Persona

- Always give the best you can
- Never put out work you're not proud of
- Maintain networking with other professionals
- Praise your peers, not yourself
- Be courteous and have good manners
- Say, "Thank you"
- Be respectful of competing programs

## Persona

- Be impartial-keep personal bias and intolerance out of the work setting
- Demonstrate self-control
- Avoid public arguments/disagreements
- Commit to quality
- Always be honest
- Do what needs to be done; don't leave it for others

### Persona

- Professionals seek and accept responsibility
- Meet or exceed expectations
- Communicate effectively and clearly
- Practice good manners
- Are punctual
- If you commit to something-follow through

### For Clinical Supervisors

- Help counselors find a personal definition of counseling that moves from mirroring expert opinions to an internalized definition
- Help them internalize responsibility for professional growth that moves from reliance on external teaching to internal responsibility for professional growth

### For Clinical Supervisors

- Help them develop a systemic identity that moves from individual skill sets to a system level identity integrated with a professional community
- Help them move from external validation to internal validation
- *The longest trip a counselor will take is from the head to the heart. (David Powell)*

### What is a Professional?

A person who is formally certified by a professional body by virtue of having completed a required course of studies and/or practice.

And whose competence can be measured against an established set of standards

This field is learned more by an "apprenticeship" method.

### A Professional has:

- A body of knowledge
- A special group of skills
- Lifelong learning
- Reflection on practice
- Accountability
- Specific roles, duties, expectations

### Identity

- How we see ourselves
- How others see us
- Our self-perception personally and in relationship to others
- An identity can be focused on:
  - What was true in the past
  - What is true in the present
  - What we hope will be true in the future

## Identity

- We can also focus our identity around what we feel obligated to become or fear we may become
- Our identity is orienting
- It provides a lens for meaning and a focus for our attention and activity

## Identity

- Identity involves adopting a set of values and ideals
- We can experience changes and reevaluate our identity in order to fit into our environmental experiences
- But, if we change our behavior in a way that is different to how we see ourselves, it will result in an identity crisis

## Professional Identity

- Professional Identity is not only our self-perception personally and in relationship to others, but . . .
- An added dimension of how we see ourselves in relationship to our clients and our colleagues
- The integration of professional training with personal attributes in the context of a professional community

## Professional Identity

- Integration of the roles, duties, expectations, and ethics of a professional combined with the values, ideals, and perceptions of our personal selves

## Professional Identity

- Is critical to the counselor's sense of self
- It is about connecting with our role, responsibilities, values and ethical standards
- If we are unable to articulate these clearly then we haven't really developed our identity as a counselor
- If our behavior is incongruent with our beliefs we experience identity confusion

## Professional Identity

- As with our personal identity, Professional Identity evolves over time and is influenced by a number of variables
- We cannot expect full identity development early in the process of becoming a counselor

### Challenges to Professional Identity

- Limited time available for the professional identity building process
- Our identity may vary depending upon our role
- Role confusion may impair the counselor's ability to function ethically
- Particularly challenging to persons with an established identity in recovery

### Challenges to Professional Identity

- The question is, are we congruent as a person across our differing roles?
- If we are, then we have a sense of integrity
- If not, then we get confused and it may result in poor boundaries
- The NAADAC Code of Ethics seeks to make professional identity congruent across professional and personal lines

### Boundaries

- Effective practice depends upon a clear identity as a counselor and
- A clear understanding of our professional roles
- Unresolved issues will lead to poor choices and poor boundaries
- Poor boundaries reinforce destructive beliefs and behaviors and negatively influence the therapeutic relationship

### For Clinical Supervisors

- Professional identity is an acquired state
- Supervisors should encourage self-reflection and be a role model
- Increased self-awareness!!
- Separating the different roles, duties, and expectations
- Finding meaning and developing beliefs
- Trusting in themselves

### For Clinical Supervisors

- Supervisor's help supervisees move through developmental and transformational tasks of counselor development (David Powell)
- Help build identity by encouraging self-evaluation, self-motivation, and self-locating within a professional community
- It takes time for professional identity to develop, and requires mentors who are willing to invest their time and energy