Triadic Supervision with Practicum and Internship Counseling Students: A Peer Supervision Approach

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Abstract:

Accreditation standards in counseling allow triadic supervision, one supervisor meeting with two supervisees simultaneously, as a substitute for individual supervision. Research, however, has indicated that triadic sessions may *complement* individual and group supervision by offering unique learning opportunities not present in other supervision modalities. We describe a peer supervision approach that capitalizes on these learning opportunities while addressing some of the challenges in conducting triadic supervision (e.g., helping supervisees give constructive feedback, keeping both engaged). We include structured peer review forms used with practicum and internship supervisees and describe different supervisor roles during triadic supervision with these two groups.

Keywords: supervision | triadic supervision | peer feedback

Article:

Beginning in 2001, accredited counseling programs were allowed to substitute triadic supervision (one supervisor meeting simultaneously with two supervisees) for individual supervision of master's practicum and internship students (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2001, 2009). Since then, several researchers have explored the benefits and challenges of this supervision modality qualitatively (e.g., Borders et al., 2012; Hein & Lawson, 2008, 2009; Hein, Lawson, & Rodriguez, 2011, 2013; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009; Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009, 2010; Oliver, Nelson, & Ybañez, 2010; Stinchfield, Hill, & Kleist, 2007, 2010). Benefits and challenges have sometimes reflected the flip side of each other. For example, in contrast to individual sessions, supervisors (typically doctoral students) and supervisees (typically practicum students) have highlighted the multiple perspectives and vicarious learning opportunities from watching segments of the peer's counseling session (Borders et al., 2012; Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009, 2011; Stinchfield et al., 2010) and observing interactions between supervisor and

peer (Stinchfield et al., 2007). Supervisees reported they learned how to give feedback and other basic supervision skills from these latter observations (Stinchfield et al., 2007). Supervisees said they particularly valued peer feedback, which sometimes was better received and better communicated than supervisor feedback (Borders et al., 2012; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009). On the other hand, supervisees often had difficulty giving constructive feedback (Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009), and supervisors sometimes were reluctant to give critical feedback to a supervisee in front of a peer (Hein & Lawson, 2008). Supervisors struggled to manage other relationship dynamics (Hein & Lawson, 2008), often attributed to poor peer matching based on counseling skill and developmental level, personality, level of motivation, emotional well-being, or openness to feedback (Hein et al., 2011, 2013). Such mismatches also limited supervisees' vicarious learning and engagement in the supervision process (Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009). Both supervisors and supervisees cited the limitations of time to be able to address both supervisees' needs adequately (Borders et al., 2012; Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009; Stinchfield et al., 2010), and supervisors reported difficulties around keeping both supervisees involved throughout the session (Borders et al., 2012; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009).

Such findings have led some to question the practice of choosing all triadic over individual sessions. In evaluations of their triadic model, Lawson, Hein, and Getz (2009) concluded triadic was not an adequate substitute for all individual supervision sessions of their master's interns, and changed their practice to include at least three individual sessions across a semester to allow a greater focus on individual relationships. Borders and colleagues (2012) heard similar feedback from supervisors and practicum supervisees who engaged in various combinations of individual and triadic sessions across a semester; many participants said they would have preferred more individual sessions, especially during the first half of the semester. These results suggest that triadic may be a *complement* of individual and group supervision rather than a substitute for individual sessions, and may offer unique learning opportunities and goals. Triadic approaches published to date (e.g., Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009; Stinchfield et al., 2007) have been based on the practice of substituting triadic for most or all individual supervision sessions. Needed, then, are triadic approaches with specific goals that target its challenges and take advantage of its opportunities, thus allowing supervisors to construct triadic sessions in intentional and purposeful ways.

In this article, we suggest one way supervisors can capitalize on a unique learning opportunity and goal of triadic supervision: periodic peer supervision that involves two supervisees watching one another's entire counseling session and preparing feedback to share during the triadic session. First, we offer the rationale for this approach, based in triadic supervision literature, and then describe the approach, including goals, procedures, and variations across developmental levels. Finally, informal evaluations by participants across several semesters and several supervisors are summarized.

Rationale

Throughout the research on triadic supervision, supervisors and supervisees have highlighted two consistent challenges: (a) supervisees' difficulties giving and receiving feedback and (b) supervisors' difficulties keeping both supervisees involved throughout a triadic session. First,

although peer feedback is a highly valued part of triadic supervision (Borders et al., 2012; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009; Lawson, Hein, & Stuart, 2009; Stinchfield et al., 2007, 2010), researchers have reported that supervisees sometimes feel awkward with the feedback process and are especially reluctant to give critical and challenging feedback, even feeling they have betrayed their peer when doing so. The process can seem so difficult that one peer may rescue the other, refuse to challenge, or even collude to avoid giving and receiving challenging feedback (Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009). As a result, Lawson and colleagues (2010) concluded that supervisors should "encourage or require honest feedback between supervision peers" (p. 86). In addition, Lawson, Hein, and Stuart (2009) noted that "supervisees may need to be trained in giving effective feedback, and providing critical feedback should be an element of such feedback" (p. 456). New supervisees, however, may lack experience providing constructive feedback and may be reluctant to do so due to their anxiety (Borders & Brown, 2005). In addition, they may be limited in the type of feedback they give due to their developmental characteristics, such as focusing on specific counseling skills versus case conceptualization or self-awareness issues (Avent, Wahesh, Purgason, Borders, & Mobley, 2015).

Suggestions to date for enhancing peer feedback include using eye contact to invite participation, posing questions that solicit input from both peers, overtly asking for engagement (Oliver et al., 2010), and letting the peers talk before the supervisor provides feedback (Goldberg, Dixon, & Wolf, 2012). Less attention has been given to providing a framework that teaches peer supervisees how to give feedback to one another. Spice and Spice (1976) referred to this as the "art of critical commentary" (p. 251) and trained their supervisees to follow three steps: focus on positive feedback, provide suggestions for improvement, and engage in dialogue around how the peers differ in their approaches and thus can learn from each other. Similarly, Lawson and colleagues (Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009) employed a strength-based approach that also emphasized giving positive feedback first. Their supervisees prepare a written, structured client case presentation report that is shared with the peer and the supervisor before the session; then the triad follows Getz's (1999) outline for reviewing that case and watching a portion of the counseling session during triadic supervision (e.g., client history and conceptualization, supervisee reaction to client and progress on meeting goals, specific request for feedback, review of videotape, feedback, and next steps). Their triadic sessions also may include use of other techniques, such as role-plays, focused observations of nonverbal behaviors or role-taking (e.g., client's perspective) (cf. Borders, 1991), and rotating suggestions of alternative strategies (cf. Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris, Betz, & Hart, 1991), to enhance peers' delivery of feedback. In addition, Stinchfield and colleagues (2007) outlined their reflective process model: after presentation of a portion of a counseling tape, the presenting peer dialogues with the supervisor, then reflects while listening to the supervisor and non-presenting peer discuss the session, and then discusses reflections with the supervisor. Nevertheless, all of these authors reported feedback challenges still affected the triadic process.

Second, supervisors consistently have reported difficulties keeping both peers engaged and focused throughout the triadic session (e.g., Borders et al., 2012; Hein & Lawson, 2008; Lawson, Hein, & Getz, 2009). They have cited challenges such as differences in the two supervisees' needs for feedback and support, ability to give constructive feedback, and openness to receiving

feedback. Others have described their attempts to enhance communication and mutual learning between the peers. A doctoral supervisor in Borders and colleagues' (2012) study wondered, "How can I use this other person to facilitate the learning of the third?" while another supervisor reported using a couples counseling framework to guide her work (e.g., "How can I get the two peers talking to each other more effectively?") (see also Oliver et al., 2010). Certainly, the techniques suggested by Lawson, Hein, and Getz (2009) and Stinchfield and colleagues (2007, 2010) can enhance peer engagement as well as peer feedback. Still, additional approaches for maintaining peer engagement that are intentional and proactive are needed.

A structured peer supervision approach addresses both of these issues by making peer feedback and peer interaction the primary focus of the triadic session. In order to facilitate this process, each supervisee, along with the supervisor, views the peer's session in advance of the triadic session with specific guidelines and recommendations for reviewing. In the subsequent triadic session the peer supervisees alternate as consultant and consultee for each other. This approach also enhances feedback and engagement by providing peers with more information about the counselor's work as well as the client's issues and in-session behaviors. Supervisees in Lawson, Hein, and Getz's (2009) study wanted to see more of the counseling videotape; they suggested longer triadic sessions so that they could watch the entire session. Supervisees in Borders and colleagues' (2012) study who watched complete counseling sessions said they valued having more information about their peers' clients because it led to deeper, more challenging feedback and enhanced vicarious learning. They also reported they were able to be supportive of each other and consult with each other outside of supervision sessions. Thus, a structured supervision approach based on peers watching each other's entire counseling session seems a promising avenue for enhancing peer feedback and engagement during triadic sessions in meaningful ways.

Next, we outline guidelines for using our peer supervision approach with practicum and internship students, including methods for teaching supervisees to give constructive feedback and keeping them engaged throughout the process. We created these guidelines in the context of our counselor education program in which practicum is conducted in an in-house training clinic and internship is field-based. University supervisors and peers have access to digital video recordings of practicum counseling sessions and audio recordings of internship counseling sessions; all clients and supervisees sign consents for taping and for use of the tapes for educational purposes. For practicum students, session recordings are maintained on a secure video system within the counseling training clinic; students are provided access to the peer's specified session recording via an individual log-in granted within the video system. For interns, session recordings are provided via a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant sharing system (e.g., www.hightail.com). Importantly, both practicum and internship supervision include regularly scheduled (i.e., weekly or bi-weekly) individual, triadic, and group supervision sessions. Thus, the triadic sessions are constructed to be complementary parts of the supervision process, intentionally designed to meet somewhat different goals from those addressed in individual and group sessions.

Practicum Triadic Peer Supervision

Practicum is a counseling student's first experience with "real clients." Developmentally, these supervisees tend to be anxious, lack confidence, have limited awareness of their strengths and growth areas, are focused on finding the "right" way to do counseling, and are dependent on their supervisor (Borders & Brown, 2005). In addition, they are highly self-focused, which means they often miss important information shared by the client, especially if the client shares the information indirectly. They also tend to focus on content—details of the client's story—rather than the counseling process, which includes their own role in the evolving interaction. Thus, our key goals for peer supervision with practicum students are to (a) diminish their self-focus, (b) guide them in learning how to give balanced feedback that includes both supportive and constructive feedback, (c) help them become more attuned to and consider the client's perspective of the counseling session, and (d) give them a method for beginning to look at the counseling process.

Given the developmental characteristics of practicum students, they often prefer individual supervision, as they tend to be dependent on their supervisors for instruction and guidance (Borders & Brown, 2005). Over the first half of the semester, with supportive supervision and concrete feedback based in review of their counseling session tapes (cf. Huhra, Yamokoski-Maynhart, & Prieto, 2008) in individual supervision and group supervision, we find that most supervisees become less anxious and self-focused and more aware of how they may learn from their peers. Thus, we do not begin triadic supervision sessions until after the mid-term evaluations of our practicum students. This delay also allows supervisors to determine appropriate pairings of their practicum students based on knowledge of the supervisees' learning goals, personalities, receptivity to feedback, and feedback style (in group sessions). During practicum, the goal is a compatible match along these supervisee characteristics, although at times a supervisor may determine that triadic sessions are contraindicated for some students (e.g., overly critical feedback style, significant skill deficiencies).

Before beginning triadic sessions, we recommend a focused discussion around giving and receiving feedback with supervisees. A group supervision session can be ideal for this discussion, as supervisees have been giving and receiving feedback during group sessions for several weeks. For example, the third author began this discussion by asking the supervisee who had just completed a case presentation what it was like to hear her peers' feedback. From there, she invited the other group members to share their experiences and create a list of principles for giving and receiving effective feedback. Then she facilitated a discussion of how the group's list of principles could be applied in their upcoming triadic supervision sessions. Supervisees were invited to share any concerns or questions they had about the triadic plans.

Given their developmental characteristics, it is important to give practicum students explicit instructions regarding procedures (e.g., how to access the peer's tape) and expectations (e.g., come prepared to share feedback) for triadic supervision sessions in the syllabus, perhaps during the group supervision session just mentioned, and in follow-up emails or other communications. We have found that providing supervisees with a structured tape review form is critical to our goal of teaching the supervisees how to give constructive feedback (see Appendix A). The questions on the form were created based on our experience with the Borders' (1991) model of

structured peer group supervision, an approach that has some empirical support (e.g., Christensen & Kline, 2001; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Starling & Baker, 2000). We have found that asking practicum students to give feedback to their peer from the perspective of the client makes feedback easier to give and to receive because they feel they are being less judgmental and less judged. For example, "As the client I feel my emotions are not being honored" is easier to say and hear than "You're not honoring your client's emotions." Even more, taking the client's perspective requires typically self-focused practicum students to view the session from the other chair, a perspective that over time begins to show up in their own counseling sessions (e.g., "Right here in this session I was really wondering what my client needed from me"). We also intentionally included questions that require the peer consultant to provide both supportive (e.g., *How was the counselor helpful?*) and constructive feedback (e.g., *What was one thing you wished for during the session that you didn't get?*).

Peer supervisees also are required to provide feedback from the vantage point of what their peer is experiencing within the counseling role. Questions from the counselor's perspective invite the peer consultant (observer) to consider a counseling session from a viewpoint different from his or her own. The peer consultee's strengths often are areas of growth for the peer consultant, so that the latter has the opportunity to examine his or her own targeted skills and goals, including how the skills are implemented and the client's response; a positive client response, as well as a peer's modeling on the recording, may provide the needed encouragement to try a new skill.

The prompt for a metaphor of some aspect of the session requires the peer to contemplate the counseling process, in line with our stated goal for triadic supervision with practicum students. When students report difficulty creating a metaphor, we offer a suggestion to get them started, such as the "dance" of the counselor and client. For example, one peer consultant described the peer consultee's approaching the client with repeated invitations (via open-ended questions and reflections) for the client to dance with the counselor, but each time the client seemed to dart away (by changing the subject), followed by the counselor chasing the client and offering another invitation but with the same result. Over time we have found that the peer consultant's metaphors become more individual and more specific to the session they watched. Often, the metaphors direct the peer's attention to relational factors that highlight the client's perspective of the relationship or illuminate mutual influences of counselor-client interactions. For example, in one triadic session, the peer consultant described the peer consultee's client as a bird rapidly flapping its wings high in the sky while the counselor tried to bring the bird down to the ground so they could focus. The dialogue transitioned into how to be directive in session and the importance of summarizing topics for the client to help co-construct goals. When the roles were switched, the second peer consultant described the peer consultee's counseling session as driving a car with the emergency brake on because the counselor kept trying to create movement but the client was resistant. The triad then discussed the importance of a counselor not working harder than the client as well as the need for more intentional silence and wait time.

Depending on the supervisees' progress and interest, we have sometimes added other questions from the Borders (1991) model, such as thinking about the client or session from a specific theoretical orientation. Beginning to apply theory to their work is a challenge for practicum

students, given their focus on skills, but many are able to practice thinking about their work (e.g., client's presenting issue and factors related to that issue, interventions, goals) in theoretical terms during the latter part of practicum.

The final question on the form encourages vicarious learning and transfer of learning, and ends the triadic feedback on a positive note, with peers sharing what they have learned from each other and how they can apply this in their own counseling work. To enhance this process, supervisors sometimes specifically ask, "What is one thing that your peer said during the feedback that you could employ in your next counseling sessions?"

Supervisors observe both peers' counseling sessions and so are prepared to intervene as needed during triadic sessions. Although the goal is to have peers' feedback to each other be the main focus of the triadic session, we have found that the supervisors often have to be involved in several ways, from keeping time (dividing the session as equally as possible between the two supervisees) to asking the peer consultee to identify "takeaways" from their peer consultant's feedback. Our supervisors often introduce learning activities such as role-plays that allow the peers to practice the skills being suggested for the next counseling session. For example, the third author asked a triadic pair to practice being more directive with clients, which not only allowed her to provide feedback about their attempts but also allowed the "client" to report her experience of the "counselor" being more direct. Our supervisees often have reported that role-plays in triadic are more impactful than role-plays with the supervisor during individual sessions, similar to reports in Lawson, Hein, and Getz (2009).

Importantly, supervisors need to be sure that relevant multicultural issues are infused in the feedback (cf. Lassiter, Napolitano, Culbreth, & Ng, 2008). For example, what cultural similarities and differences between counselor and client does the peer consultant experience from taking the perspective of the client, and how are these affecting the client's view of the counselor (i.e., peer consultee) and the relationship? Similarly, how does the peer consultant from the perspective of the counselor see multicultural factors influencing the peer consultee's choice of interventions? What power dynamics might be represented in the metaphor of the relationship?

We strongly encourage practicum supervisors to schedule an individual session between triadic sessions, as processing of the triadic experience with each supervisee often is needed. For example, the supervisor may choose to review portions of the triadic session during individual supervision to process anxiety or discomfort observed while the supervisee was giving or receiving feedback. In addition, the supervisor can help the supervisee transfer what he or she observed to his or her own goals. For example, a supervisor might say, "In your feedback last week, you pointed out how the gentle confrontation that your peer used really seemed to facilitate greater insight for the client. I know that using confrontation is a goal for you, and I am wondering how you might use what you learned from watching your peer in your counseling work?"

We build on practicum students' growing feedback skills, developing ability to take multiple perspectives of the counseling session, and beginning awareness of counseling process, and add additional layers in using the peer supervision approach with interns.

Internship Triadic Peer Supervision

Developmentally, interns are more confident, have a fairly consistent awareness of their strengths and growth areas, and are more open to discussing their personal reactions to clients, including transference and countertransference (Borders & Brown, 2005). Nevertheless, they can experience a setback when they face a new client characteristic or clinical issue. Thus, in addition to building on the goals for practicum students' triadic sessions, for internship students we add several goals:

- highlight theoretical orientation and case conceptualization,

- give attention to self-awareness issues in counseling and in giving feedback,

- give more in-depth focus to process issues that show up in counseling and supervision sessions,

- learn basic supervision skills,

- practice consultation skills, and

- develop a desire for ongoing peer supervision and consultation post-graduation.

Similar to the process described for practicum students, we have found it helpful for triadic to be introduced during a group supervision session with interns. In contrast with the introduction given to practicum students, however, triadic supervision for interns is described as an intervention designed to help prepare them for future consultations on the job with other counselors. We highlight this goal because some counseling graduates (e.g., school counselors) may not receive any additional supervision after completing their degree, and all practitioners at times will need consultation immediately rather than during a later scheduled supervision session. Also, similar to our practicum procedures, we advise beginning triadic supervision three or more weeks into the semester when the supervisor has had an opportunity to learn interns' goals, assess skills through reviewing several counseling sessions for each intern, determine the counseling orientation of each intern, observe interns' interactions in several group supervision sessions, and observe how interns give and receive feedback.

In contrast to the intention to make compatible pairings for practicum students, our goal for interns is to intentionally provide a complementary mismatch of counseling skills, styles, theoretical orientations, and/or self-awareness and multicultural awareness, as mismatched pairings are possible. For example, the second author paired a supervisee with a learning goal of being more immediate and sharing her personal experience of her client more openly with a peer who had demonstrated the ability to be assertive and genuine with her clients. She paired another supervisee who had demonstrated high competency in her work with children with a peer who expressed discomfort around her work with young children on her caseload. Similarly, an intern who had demonstrated discomfort addressing multicultural issues was paired with a peer who

had successfully completed a semester of internship in an agency serving a highly diverse clientele, including immigrant and refugee clients. It is important to make peers aware of the supervisor's intentional mismatch goal so that they can keep this in mind while watching their peer's counseling sessions and address the peer's supervision needs during triadic. In essence, the paired interns become "experts" for each other in providing feedback from a different perspective. Moreover, each supervisee is provided a developmentally relevant (i.e., accessible) model for *how* to address the counseling issue. The exchange is collaborative, focused, and strength-based (i.e., sessions are shared as learning opportunities), important components of effective consultation and supervision skills we want the interns to develop and possess post-graduation. While every intention is made to create a mutually beneficial learning opportunity for both supervisees, it is not always possible to pair supervisees with mutually complementary different skills, experiences, and perspectives. It is important that the supervisor remains aware of these learning dynamics within triadic sessions in order to potentially augment peer supervision feedback.

Interns complete a review of their own counseling session and construct several questions that specify what type of feedback they desire from their peer consultant. As with practicum students, we provide a form for interns to complete while reviewing their peers' counseling session, and request that they bring the form to the triadic session and use their responses as a guide for organizing and delivering their feedback (see Appendix B). In contrast to the practicum form, and in line with our goals, we include questions on the internship form that give more attention to theoretical orientation and case conceptualization, counselor self-awareness, and the counseling process.

We have found that, without a specific prompt, peers are less likely to share feedback around self-awareness issues, as this feedback can be more personal than feedback about skills or theoretical orientation. Nevertheless, the peers typically know each other well after being in classes and other supervision sessions together for some time and thus may even have insights that the supervisor would miss. For example, a peer consultant had reviewed an intern's family session at an inpatient facility during which discharge plans for the adolescent were to be discussed. The father became angry, the parents yelled at each other, and the father stormed out of the room. The peer consultee reported feeling frozen and powerless, and said he did not know what to do. The peer consultant, who knew some of the intern's own family history, quietly stated, "They're not your parents." We also include a prompt designed to enhance the peer consultants' own self-awareness, asking them to share what internal reactions (e.g., anxiety, protective feelings, identification with the client) they had while reviewing the session and explain how they make sense of their reactions.

The multicultural prompt requires peers to consider these dynamics in each session. Sometimes multicultural feedback involves enhancing the peer consultee's understanding of a client, such as brainstorming how a male international student from a male-dominated culture might feel about working with a female counselor. Other times, multicultural feedback dovetails with self-awareness feedback. For example, one peer consultant identified how the intern's high value for education likely was contributing to the peer consultee's frustration with an undergraduate client

who "just wanted to get a C." The peer consultant stated that the client probably would love to have the "luxury" of devoting herself to her studies, as the peer consultee had done, but was instead focused on getting her degree so that she could get a promotion at her current job that would allow her to better support her child financially.

Similar to the practicum form, peers are asked to share both strengths and areas for improvement with each other. In addition, the final question on the internship form again encourages transfer of learning and ends the triadic feedback on a positive note, with peers sharing how they can apply what they learned in their own counseling work.

Ideally, the supervisor functions much more as a process observer in internship versus practicum triadic sessions, highlighting the process of the supervision session and giving attention to self-awareness issues that may be influencing the peers' behaviors in counseling as well as the triadic session. Thus, the supervisor may ask questions such as, "What did you experience as your peer consultant gave you feedback?"; "What was it like for you (peer consultant) to give that constructive feedback?"; and "Thinking back to the feedback you just gave your peer, is there something you held back or were hesitant to share?" Such feedback and processing enhance our goals around supervisee self-awareness in internship triadic peer supervision as well as their consultation and supervision skills.

We encourage supervisors in internship triadic sessions to allow the peers to direct the first part of the session during which they give feedback to each other, which is in line with our goals of their practicing basic supervision and consultation skills as well as developing a desire to continue these peer interactions post-graduation. In addition, this approach ensures that both supervisees are engaged throughout the session. Our increased attention to process issues is relevant to the different role of the supervisor in intern triadic sessions. Although supervisors have watched both counseling sessions, they primarily give their attention to observing the peers' interactions and the process, and then comment on these in the last 10 or 15 minutes of the session. For example, the second author reported providing the following feedback at the end of one triadic session:

You were quite strength-based in providing feedback to your peer. It is good that you are sensitive to what was good about your peer's work and you were able to clearly state what she should continue to do in her work. I also sensed your reluctance to provide constructive feedback.

This feedback led to a discussion about the peer consultant's feelings about giving feedback and potential barriers to giving constructive feedback. After exploring fears and concerns about giving and receiving feedback, the second author stated,

In the future, it's great to continue to lead with positive feedback, as you did here. Also, remember that the supervision process works best when you identify your peer's growth areas. For example, I noticed x ([appropriate counselor response] resulted in y [client's emotional response]. However, it was apparent that the client's emotion was met with counselor anxiety and discomfort. Your sharing an observation of your peer's discomfort becomes an opportunity for your peer to explore the nature of her anxiety around her client's emotional responses.

Discussion

The peer supervision approach to triadic sessions has been well received by our practicum and internship supervisees. In their verbal and written feedback, they have echoed the benefits reported in previous examinations of triadic supervision. Supervisees have said that they value being able to learn from and get feedback from their peers, appreciate gaining a different perspective, and enjoy being able to give feedback to their peers. Others have noted that having the "same partner allowed for bonding and understanding of each other's style," and some appreciated that the "supervisor gave helpful direction when my peer supervisor felt lost/stuck." Many have indicated that they rarely get to see others' counseling work, especially a full session, and find the peer consultee's modeling and their vicarious learning greatly assists them in connecting skills to practice. A practicum student noted, "It was interesting to analyze the work of someone else, as I felt I could be more objective than with my own work." Still, our supervisees also have reported some challenges similar to previous reports (e.g., "Sometimes it could be unbalanced so that one person got more feedback than the other"; "I struggled with how to balance compliments with critiques and how to frame critiques in ways that my peer would respond positively"). They have reported that the structured review form helped them learn what to look for while watching the session, which addressed their doubts around their ability to provide helpful feedback ("I often felt 'what do I know? You know the client much better.'"). They also have reported challenges specific to our procedures (e.g., "It took me a long time to review someone else's tape and provide feedback"; "Sometimes I wish the supervisor would have given more advice and shared her knowledge"). Supervisors have pointed to some of the same challenges and also reported difficulties "staying out of the peer's way" and "knowing when to intervene." Importantly, our supervisees all have agreed that triadic supervision prepared them to provide consultation and peer supervision in the future with colleagues on the job. When asked what she learned about giving peer feedback, one supervisee said she had learned "to keep not just the client's culture, values, and beliefs in mind, but also to get to know my peer at a deeper level. This way I can… assist my peer in connecting to how her own values and beliefs may be helping or hindering the therapeutic process." In addition, although our triadic sessions are 90 minutes, most supervisees have wished for more time and discussion of more than one client. Thus, our peer supervision approach does not eliminate all challenges with triadic supervision, but provides additional benefits from the review of entire sessions and, for interns, supervisor feedback about their supervision and consultation feedback skills. Nevertheless, our approach seems to amplify CACREP's (2009) definition of triadic supervision as a "tutorial and mentoring relationship" (p. 63).

Our peer supervision approach is in line with triadic supervision best practices, as outlined by a task force of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (Borders et al., 2014). These guidelines emphasize that supervisors are "intentional about structure and goals" (4.e.), in developmentally appropriate ways, when conducting triadic supervision. The supervisor creates supervisee pairs "that enhance the work of both supervisees" (4.viii.). The supervisor also "guides peer feedback in ways that help the supervisees learn how to give balanced and constructive feedback" (4.v.) and "that help supervisees accept feedback they may perceive as

challenging" (4.vi.). The peer supervision approach also follows best practice guidelines specific to our procedures:

When triadic supervision involves one peer's review of the other peer's counseling session before the supervision session, the supervisor provides a structure or format for the review that facilitates balanced and constructive feedback (e.g., What did the peer do well? What could the peer have done differently? What did you learn from reviewing your peer's counseling session?). (4.ix.)

The approach also is in line with supervisors' ethical obligations around peer relationships in supervision, as stated in the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics (F.7.g): "Counselor educators make every effort to ensure that the rights of students are not compromised when their peers lead experiential counseling activities in traditional, hybrid, and/or online formats (e.g., counseling groups, skills classes, clinical supervision" (2014, p. 14).

The peer supervision approach also supports an overarching goal of developing supervisees' cognitive complexity; learning to consider multiple perspectives, such as those provided by peers, is a key theme in Blocher's (1983) suggestions for encouraging cognitive growth. In addition, the approach reflects several aspects of evidenced-based teaching (Petty, 2006) that encourage high levels of cognitive processes, including active and experiential learning activities that ask students to work with complex problems, as well as peer discussion, teaching, and feedback.

Despite the positive feedback from our supervisees and the indirect support (from code of ethics, best practices guidelines, evidenced-based teaching literature) for the procedures and processes in the peer supervision approach, the efficacy of the approach needs to be tested directly. Indeed, to date, research on triadic supervision models has been focused on the *experiences* of participants (supervisors and supervisees) rather than *outcomes*. Studies that investigate our stated goals for practicum and internship triadic supervision, as well as the overarching goal of increasing supervisees' cognitive complexity, would help us begin to understand what aspects of the approach are most impactful and which might need to be revised. Studies of adaptations of the model with post-degree, pre-licensure counselors and established practitioners seeking more formal peer consultation (cf. Crutchfield & Borders, 1997) could explore its feasibility beyond educational settings. In addition, the approach and prompts could be adapted for peer supervision of supervision in supervision training programs. These and other studies are needed to further the development of the "pedagogy of triadic supervision and its legitimate place within the practice of supervision" (Borders et al., 2012, p. 295).

Appendix A: Guidelines for Peer Tape Review by Practicum Students for Triadic Supervision Sessions

Peer Review of Supervision Tape

Answer these two questions before sending this form to your peer for triadic supervision.

- Briefly state your plans for the session.

- State your individual goals that you are working toward in the session.

Guidelines for Watching the Peer Tape

Complete these questions as you watch your peer's tape, as your responses will be the outline for giving feedback to your peer. Bring the completed form to our triadic session.

- As you listen to the counseling session, take on the **role of the client**. In giving peer feedback, answer the following questions. Please write in the first
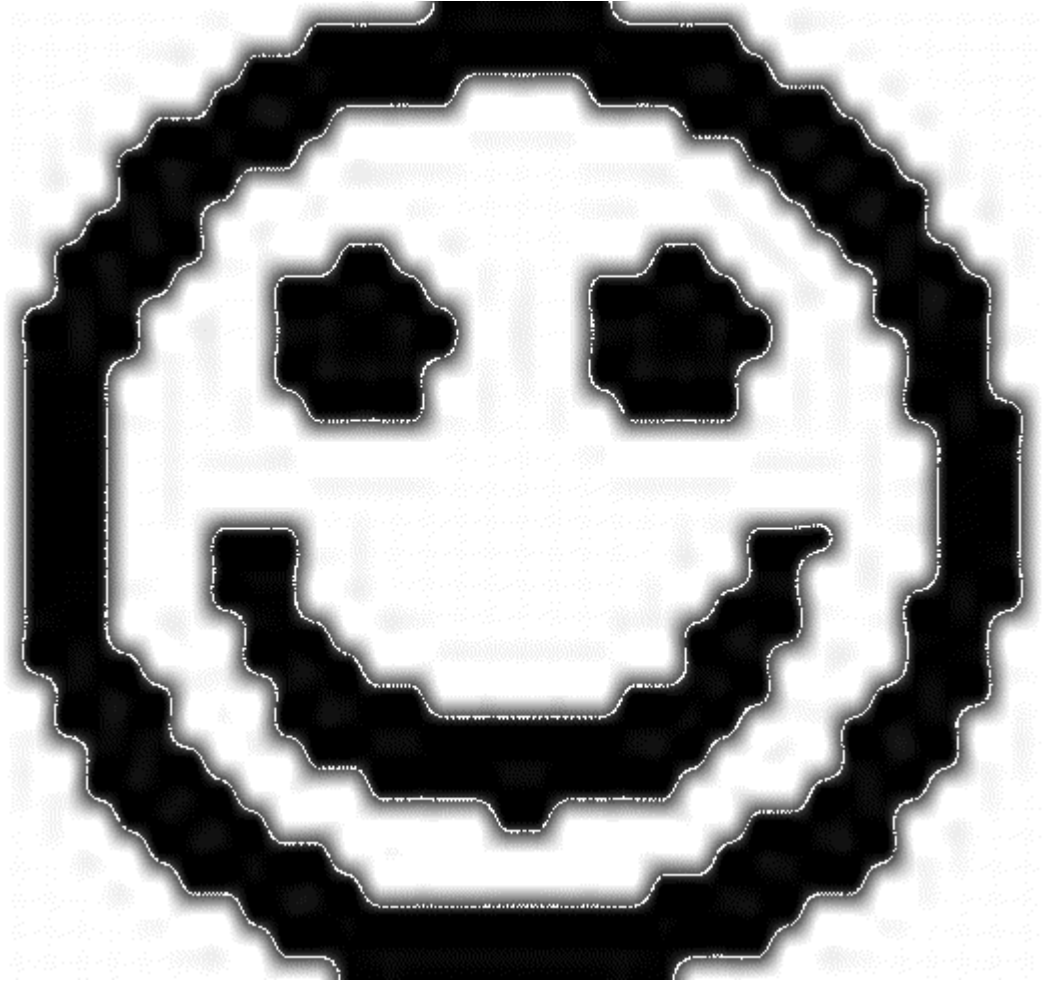
person.

- o a. How did you feel during the session?

- o b. How was the counselor helpful?

- o c. No session is perfect. What was one thing you wished for during the session that you didn't get?

- o d. What is your hope for the next session?

- Now think about the session from the **counselor's** perspective and respond to the following questions.

- o a. What were my strengths during the session?
- o b. What is a metaphor that seems to represent this session, the counselor-client relationship, and/or the client? Explain your metaphor.
- Now think about this session from your own perspective and answer the following question.
  - o a. What is (at least) one thing you learned from observing this session? How might you apply this in your counseling sessions?

Appendix B: Guidelines for Peer Tape Review by Internship Students for Triadic Supervision Sessions

Guidelines for Feedback for Internship Peer Supervision

Please listen to your peer's entire tape and read your peer's supervision requests prior to the supervision session.

In addition to addressing your peer's specific supervision needs, please review the following discussion prompts. Based on your experience of your peer's session, use these prompts to organize your discussion of your peer's tape. Please organize your feedback and discussion of your peer's tape to take approximately 40 minutes.

- 1. What observations did you make about your peer's work in this particular session?
  - o a. What was your overall sense of the counselor/client rapport and working relationship?
  - o b. What skills did the counselor use most? Were the skills appropriate for the client and setting? What other skills might be helpful with this particular client or a similar client?
  - o c. What did you observe regarding the purpose and direction in the counselor's intervention?
  - o d. How would you characterize your peer's theoretical orientation? Are there alternative perspectives or additions to the conceptualization that you would provide?
  - o e. Identify at least one potential multicultural dynamic that could be influencing the counselor, client, their relationship, or other aspect of the counseling session.
  - o f. Based on your knowledge of your peer and his or her work, identify at least one potential self-awareness issue that might be present in this session (e.g., transference or countertransference, counselor values, relationship dynamic).
- 2. What strengths did you note in your peer's work? In other words, what types of things seemed to be most effective?

- 3. What areas for improvement did you note in your peer's work? In other words, what could have been done better? What did you notice about your peer's work in this session that was different from other sessions you have watched?

- 4. What was your experience as you watched the tape (i.e., anxiety, concerns, feelings, etc.)? In other words, did anything come up for you internally as you watched the tape? If so, what do you make of your reactions?

- 5. What did you learn from your peer's work? How might you apply what you learned in a future session with a current client?

Notes

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