

Confronting Confrontation in Clinical Supervision: An Analytical Autoethnography

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Abstract:

Through an analytic autoethnography, the authors detail an experience of confrontation within the context of supervision of supervision. In the coconstructed narrative, the authors describe the events taking place before, during, and after the confrontation experience from the perspective of both the faculty supervisor and beginning doctoral-level supervisor. Finally, the authors provide an analysis of the narrative based in supervisory models and theories of change.

Keywords: supervision | supervisor development | supervision pedagogy | autoethnography

Article:

Confrontation has long been considered a core skill in counseling (Egan, 1982; Tamminen & Smaby, 1981) and supervision (Borders et al., 1991). Confrontation is an advanced skill that invites clients and supervisees to examine some aspect of their behavior that is either self-defeating or harmful to others, recognize the consequences of that behavior, and then take responsibility for changing that behavior. A good confrontation is “an invitation to grow” and “promotes self-confrontation and corrective action” (Tamminen & Smaby, 1981, p. 42). Counselors and supervisors have both the “right and obligation to confront” (Tamminen & Smaby, 1981, p. 42); not confronting when confrontation is needed allows the clients' or supervisees' behavior to continue and, in effect, implies support for or agreement with the behavior (Tamminen & Smaby, 1981). Nevertheless, many counselors and supervisors are reluctant to use confrontation, fearing they will damage the relationship, hurt feelings, or risk an angry response.

New supervisors, in particular, may be overly concerned about being liked by their supervisees and, as a result, avoid giving any form of constructive feedback (Borders, 2010a). According to developmental models of supervisor growth (e.g., Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998; Watkins, 1990, 1993, 1994), beginners are anxious, doubt their competence and judgment, and

are particularly concerned about their evaluation responsibilities. In recent studies, doctoral student supervisors said they doubted their ability to supervise; were unsure about realistic expectations for their supervisees (Gazzola, De Stefano, Thériault, & Audet, 2013); worried about how their supervisees would receive critical feedback (e.g., if they sounded mean or too harsh; Rapisarda, Desmond, & Nelson, 2011); and questioned their judgment, especially when their supervisees were not progressing as expected (Majcher & Daniluk, 2009).

With such reluctance about giving constructive feedback, beginning supervisors likely would be even more anxious about using confrontation with their supervisees. Expert (highly experienced) supervisors remembered having such anxiety about being confrontational during their early years as a supervisor (Grant, Schofield, & Crawford, 2012). Instead of confronting, they said they often used avoidant strategies (e.g., ignored, denied) when they faced difficulties in supervision (e.g., supervisee competence, conflict in the supervisory relationship). The experts added that they continue to experience some discomfort confronting their supervisees, but they do not hesitate now when confrontation is needed. They reported using confrontation when relational (e.g., model, validate, normalize) and reflective (e.g., remain mindful and monitor, process own countertransference) interventions were unsuccessful. The experts believed they were now able to confront while still supporting and validating their supervisees at the same time. Similarly, experienced supervisors in two studies admitted they had not disclosed their negative reactions to their supervisees' counseling performance or behavior in supervision (Ladany & Melincoff, 1999) or had withheld feedback they thought might be too subjective (Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005), often because of fears about a supervisee's negative reaction or negative impact on the supervisory relationship.

An important goal of supervisory training programs, then, would be helping beginning supervisors to get past their reluctance and avoidance to learn how and when confrontation skills are appropriate to the supervision context (e.g., Hoffman et al., 2005). They might need to use confrontation, for example, when supervisees continue to lag behind in their skills development, repeatedly do not follow standard protocols (e.g., assess for suicidal ideation during intake), do not incorporate the supervisor's feedback into their counseling sessions, have poor professional boundaries with clients, continually avoid exploring relevant self-awareness issues, or exhibit problematic relationship dynamics in supervision (e.g., negative transferences). Getting past their reluctance, however, seems rather difficult for beginning supervisors. Baker, Exum, and Tyler (2002) found little evidence that their doctoral supervisors had developed more advanced skills such as confrontation even after completing a didactic course and supervised practicum in supervision. Borders and Fong (1994) reported that doctoral students enrolled in a supervision practicum tended to choose indirect (vs. directive) interventions in hypothetical situations with supervisees, even when the confrontational intervention was the preferred choice of expert supervisors. Nevertheless, beginning supervisors' ability and willingness to use confrontation may be pivotal to their overall self-confidence and development considering that Johnson and Stewart (2008) found that "directive skills" (e.g., "confront supervisee with a concern," p. 231) predicted experienced supervisors' self-efficacy in all three supervisor roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant.

To date, however, we have yet to identify pedagogical approaches that are effective in supporting beginning supervisors through their struggles to use confrontation, when needed, during supervision. Considering the challenges and level of emotion with using this skill, a detailed, inside account of a beginning supervisor's (ultimately) successful experience using confrontation, as well as the supervision-of-supervision interventions that supported this experience, could be a particularly instructive starting point. Autoethnography offers one approach for obtaining such a first-hand report.

Autoethnography is (a) a researcher's first-person account (story or narrative) of an event or process and (b) the researcher's reflective and reflexive analysis of that experience (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Hays & Singh, 2012). Autoethnographic researchers, who are or become members of the group under study, seek to provide insight about an issue through both introspection and theoretical examination of their experiences. Two types of autoethnography exist: *evocative* and *analytic*. Analytic autoethnography differs from evocative autoethnography in that it analyzes and generalizes the data rather than providing personal reflections only (Anderson, 2006; Vryan, 2006). Specifically, Anderson (2006) noted that analytic autoethnographers gather and analyze empirical data with the goals of stimulating “theoretical development, refinement, and extension” (p. 387) and encouraging further conversation. Autoethnographers can create and structure their narratives in a variety of formats (Ellis et al., 2011). *Coconstructed narratives* are one such format that “illustrate the meanings of relational experiences, particularly how people collaboratively cope with the ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions” about some aspect of their relationship, “often told about or around an epiphany” (Ellis et al., p. 279). More often found in sociology, anthropology, and communication studies, autoethnography recently was applied in the analysis of a counseling relationship (Kuo & Arcuri, 2014). In this study, we sought to coconstruct an introspective narrative about our experiences as faculty supervisor and beginning doctoral supervisor working together to help the doctoral supervisor overcome her struggles to use confrontation with a supervisee. Following the narrative, we provide an analysis of events before, during, and after the doctoral student's epiphany based on supervisory models and theories of change. Our overarching research questions were the following: (a) What issues and struggles did the doctoral supervisor face in using confrontation with her supervisees? (b) How did the faculty supervisor aid the doctoral supervisor in working through those issues and struggles? (c) What models and theories help explain the events in the narrative and contribute to the development of a supervision-of-supervision pedagogy?

Method

Context and Participants

The narrative was constructed by two opportunistic complete member researchers (Anderson, 2006) because we both were members of the supervisory context under examination, as well as the counselor education and supervision training community at large. Specifically, our data come from an experience in a required doctoral supervision internship within a full-time Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)-accredited counselor education program at a midsized university in the Southeast. The internship

involved doctoral students supervising master's practicum students in the in-house clinic. Per CACREP (2015) requirements, practicum students completed a minimum of 40 contact hours with undergraduate clients, including students on academic probation and volunteers from various other classes, and received weekly individual and group supervision. All counseling and supervision sessions were digitally recorded.

The experience involved three participants: (a) the faculty supervisor (FS) of the doctoral supervisor (first author), (b) the doctoral supervisor (DS; second author), and (c) the master's-level practicum counselor (PC). Before supervision commenced, both DS and PC signed an informed consent for taping and use of their supervision work for educational and research purposes.

FS was a White, female, tenured faculty member with 30 years of professional experience in counselor education. She provided weekly group supervision and biweekly individual supervision for seven doctoral supervisors, including DS. Her teaching and research focus was clinical supervision, with particular emphasis on developmental models, supervisor training, and the pedagogy of supervision practice. DS was a White, female, 2nd-year doctoral student in her mid-20s and in her fourth semester of study in the doctoral program. She had previously completed a didactic counseling supervision course and brief practicum (taught by FS). As part of the internship, she was responsible for providing weekly individual supervision of two master's-level counselors completing their practicum experiences. She also held weekly group supervision sessions for four master's-level counselors, including the two she supervised individually. Finally, PC was a White, female, 1st-year, second-semester counseling student in her mid-30s enrolled in the clinical mental health counseling track. (We have altered some of PC's characteristics to protect anonymity.) During her first semester, PC had completed course work in helping skills, counseling theories, ethical and legal issues, and multicultural considerations in counseling.

Data Sources

Beyond the personal recollections of FS and DS, data sources for our autoethnography included extensive notes and video recordings from across the semester. Specifically, we reviewed FS's case notes of individual and group supervision-of-supervision sessions and DS's detailed case notes of her weekly individual and group supervision sessions with PC (also reviewed by FS throughout the semester). In addition, we analyzed DS's comprehensive, reflective reviews of seven supervision session video recordings submitted to FS throughout the semester. Finally, we reviewed other extensive notes recorded by FS and DS while observing multiple video recordings of DS's supervision sessions with PC (including the seven submitted by DS to FS). Review of these notes and video recordings yielded the following coconstructed, introspective narrative, as well as the reflexive analyses and application of theoretical frameworks described in the Discussion section.

Trustworthiness

For autoethnographers, reliability and validity rest in the reader's evaluation of the narrator's credibility, based on the reader's membership in the same group as the researcher (in this case,

supervisors; Ellis et al., 2011): Could the experiences in the narrative have happened? Is this a truthful account? Is the story coherent? Does the narrative connect with the reader? And, perhaps most important, can the narrative improve the lives of others (in this case, improve supervision of beginning supervisors)? In addition, autoethnographers must provide “textual visibility of the researcher's self” (Anderson, 2006, p. 384) in light of their roles as members of the culture under study (i.e., supervision of supervision) and researchers of that culture. We explicitly own our perspectives and experiences throughout the narrative to provide this visibility. In terms of transferability, an autoethnography is “always being tested by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 283) and whether the narrative illuminates unfamiliar or new processes. It is from these vantage points, then, that we offer the following narrative and theoretical analyses for readers' evaluation.

Coconstructive Narrative: Confronting Confrontation

In the following coconstructed narrative, we both detail the events leading up to, during, and after the confrontation and provide reflections from our individual perspectives. Through this introspective narrative, we offer insight into the struggles faced by DS and the ways FS tried to help her navigate these challenges, leading to DS's epiphany about confronting confrontation.

Before: A New Role

- *DS*: As a beginning supervisor, I had very limited experience supervising master's-level counselors. Although I had acquired much knowledge related to supervisory interventions and models, I was acutely aware of my lack of experience. Indeed, I likened my experience as a beginning supervisor to my experience as a beginning counselor, and I faced similar challenges. For example, I did not yet know what I did not know; I desired to be liked and found effective by my supervisees; and I was fairly self-focused as I contemplated my performance, my abilities, and my faculty supervisor's thoughts about my work. After my first few sessions with my supervisees, I began to identify specific goals for myself as a supervisor, including the pacing of my sessions, finding an appropriate balance between supporting and challenging my supervisees, and understanding the developmental process of beginning counselors.
- *FS*: Having worked with DS in several capacities during her master's and doctoral programs, I knew she was very open to feedback and committed to her growth. I knew she would work really hard to help her supervisees, and perhaps be overly responsible (e.g., overprepare). Overall, I felt her initial goals and anxieties were quite developmentally appropriate.

Before: Initial Supervisory Work

- *DS*: My work with PC began with rapport building as I sought to create a strong supervisory alliance. PC had a very positive attitude, was cheerful and energetic, and rapport came easily. A few weeks into practicum, PC began submitting video recordings of her counseling sessions for review. I quickly became aware of several goals for her

development, including the need for a more professional tone in sessions rather than casual banter with clients, as well as growth related to her response to client's negative emotions. It was clear that PC was uncomfortable meeting her clients in a negative emotional space, and she consistently attempted to make her clients feel better by “rescuing” them through reframing, pointing out the positives, or quickly moving on to more pleasant topics. As this was PC's first experience counseling actual clients, I conceptualized her behavior as developmentally appropriate. I reasoned that her clients' negative affect might trigger her own discomfort with negative emotions or feelings of insecurity related to knowing what to “do” with client sadness, anger, hopelessness, and fear. As supervision progressed, I attempted to introduce these patterns as areas in need of growth by playing clips from PC's tapes in which the client became emotional and PC responded with laughter and quickly shifted the topic. I invited PC to reflect upon the exchanges, and we spoke about the importance of joining clients in uncomfortable places. This led to discussions about PC's early family-of-origin experiences in which she felt encouraged to express positive rather than negative emotions. Although I continued to broach the topics of maintaining a professional tone and responding effectively to client negative emotion, I began to realize that our dialogue was general, somewhat indirect, and tended to be lighthearted (in similar fashion to PC's clinical sessions). Even these initial attempts to provide constructive feedback elicited questions and doubts within me. I asked FS to help me understand the appropriate balance between supporting and challenging my supervisee, as I did not want to damage our supervisory relationship, which was strong and amiable, or set unrealistic expectations for the pace of her growth. I felt conflicted by my desire to support PC, yet I had a sense that there was a need for skill development beyond what I was observing.

- *FS*: During the first few weeks of the semester, I was assessing both DS and PC, especially around what would be “the work” this semester for each. Through our supervision sessions and her case notes, it was clear that DS was feeling a lot of responsibility, as expected, for PC's development. DS quickly identified the need to work on revising PC's ideas of being a good counselor: getting her clients to a “happy place.” We both agreed that PC's in-session performance had to change; there was occasional slight improvement, but her change was minimal and inconsistent. PC would self-report “I'm doing better!” but her self-ratings of submitted tapes were consistently higher than DS's ratings of them.

In review of several sessions of DS and PC, I noted DS's attempts to address the needed changes in PC's work. She purposively modeled a professional tone, used the counseling session tape to practice skills (e.g., reflections of feelings), conducted role plays, and modeled these skills when PC became emotional around the family-of-origin messages—all good interventions. I observed that DS was working REALLY hard in preparing for sessions; she reviewed the submitted tape, sometimes more than once, spot checked several other sessions weekly, and brought in lots of counseling session clips for review and practice. However, it seemed to me that their supervision sessions remained amiable, as both danced around the lack of change. DS had named the growth areas at the end of several sessions, although in a general, broad way. DS told PC that these areas

needed to improve, but did not point specifically to the differences in their ratings and did not explicitly say, “On these skills, you are at a 1 (or 2)” (inadequate). By her nature, DS is quite optimistic, but by the 6th week her supervision case notes clearly reflected some frustration. Clearly, a change in DS's approach was needed, which meant I needed to do something different to create change during our supervision-of-supervision sessions.

During: The Epiphany

- *DS*: The week prior to my seventh supervision session with PC, I had a strong reaction to the video recording she submitted for review. Although I felt I had been addressing my concerns in previous sessions, I observed no evidence of improvement in PC's work. Her tone in session remained very informal, and she continued to respond to the client's negative emotions with rescuing techniques rather than validations and reflections. I felt deflated as I watched the video recording and unsure how to conceptualize my supervisee. I questioned whether my expectations of PC's clinical skills were too high or whether I needed to be doing more in supervision to challenge her. I decided to make these concerns the focus of my supervision session with FS that week. As we started the meeting, I shared with FS my confusion and uncertainty regarding PC. What was developmentally appropriate? Was my assessment of her skills correct? As I described my experience, I could feel my defeat and self-doubt growing. My supervisor, aware of my negative affect, asked me what I needed from her in that moment. Partially in jest, I said I wished she would watch one of PC's counseling sessions to tell me if my conceptualization was correct. FS responded, “Bring me the tape.” Shocked but relieved, I brought her a session and together we watched a clip of PC's work. FS confirmed the validity of my concerns and went further to say that without significant improvement PC would not pass practicum. She then asked, “When are you going to tell her?” The finality of her question shocked me, and I responded in confusion, “Why would I do that?” Telling PC that she might not pass practicum seemed so absolute, and yet, in the silence that followed, I knew that I needed to do something different. Although I felt full support from FS, I knew that she was confronting me as well (and, later, I would use this experience as a model for confronting PC). My supervisor was challenging me to stretch myself and provide direct feedback to PC about her need to improve. Suddenly, I was aware of the gravity of the situation and my responsibility as a supervisor to act, yet I was reluctant. I did not know how to deliver such direct, challenging feedback and was fearful of the impact confrontation would have on my relationship with PC. Up until that point, rapport with PC was strong, and I believed she felt safe in our sessions. Beyond her safety, however, part of me enjoyed being liked by my supervisee and feared losing that respect and appreciation.

As I voiced my concerns, FS asked me to consider what PC's client must have experienced in the session we viewed together. This question silenced me. I allowed myself to consider the experience of the client risking vulnerability as she expressed her pain and sadness, only to feel unheard and invalidated as the topic quickly shifted. A great sadness displaced my fear as I considered her dejection. I realized that in focusing solely on my relationship with PC, I had

neglected my responsibility to her clients. This was a turning point in my supervisory development. It was compassion for PC's clients that dissolved my reluctance to learn and employ the skill of confrontation, and I was committed. Next, I needed to build my competence regarding this skill. FS and I then began practicing how I would confront PC. Together, we brainstormed several possible responses PC might have to my feedback that could minimize or dismiss the concerns. After deliberating, we practiced. FS assumed the role of PC and we role-played how I would respond to each possible reaction PC might have to the confrontation. FS even offered that I could explain to PC that my supervisor also watched the tape and made a similar assessment. I did not know if I would do this, as I wanted my own evaluation to be enough, but knowing I had this option brought relief. At the end of that supervision session, I had a new sense of resolve, confidence, and clarity.

- *FS*: At beginning of our supervision session, DS's emotions of frustration, anxiety, and defeat were palpable. I immediately felt on high alert. DS needed much validation, especially for her assessment of PC's skill level, which I provided by reviewing a segment of PC's tape with her. I also wanted to validate her concern about confronting PC but, at the same time, knew I had to shake it up, as both were stuck. DS had to address the lack of change directly and PC had to show an ability to be with clients' negative emotions. Multiple parallel processes were rushing around in my brain, so that I knew my work with DS in this session could be pivotal in her development, as well as PC's.

I asked the “When are you going to tell her?” question based on one of our supervision rules: Let supervisees know as soon as we know there is a problem. It also seemed a way to get DS's immediate attention around changing her approach, as well as modeling how to be fairly blunt and put the issue directly on the table. I felt our relationship was solid enough that I could really push, although I also reiterated several times during the session that I knew I was pushing her out of her comfort zone.

During this time I was thinking, “How do I get DS's attention? What would be worse to her than confronting PC?” From somewhere the idea of pointing to the clients' experience of PC came to me, and that perspective hit DS as I hoped it would. From there, I knew it was important to anticipate the various ways PC might respond, based on how I had seen her “dance” in response to DS's earlier feedback, and then role-play so DS would already have words to deal with those responses. It was really important to me that I anticipate every stumbling block I could think of and help DS be prepared for each so that she could be successful in confronting PC. Knowing that DS would have high empathy for PC's discomfort, I told her not to apologize for making PC feel badly, as sitting in her own negative space was the first step in helping PC be able to do this with her clients. Finally, I directed DS to start the session differently, saying that “today's session is going to be different”; this ensured that DS was direct and on topic from the very beginning of the next session. I also asked her to think about how she would prepare herself mentally and emotionally the morning of the confrontation session, and she identified several ways she could calm and focus herself. Throughout the session, I tried to be encouraging (“You can do this”), asking her to remember instances when she had been firm successfully (e.g., as an instructor for an undergraduate course) and pointing to her success in the role plays. When the session ended, I

knew DS would deliver the feedback in a less forceful way than I had with her, in her own style, which was fine; I had been trying to make a point. I also was confident that she would clearly state the direct message of PC potentially not passing practicum, more than once if needed.

During: The Confrontation Experience

- *DS*: Later that week, I had my seventh supervision session with PC. Just as I practiced with FS, I welcomed PC and informed her that today was going to be a challenging session. I clearly articulated the patterns I had observed regarding her informality in counseling and her problematic responses to client negative affect and concluded with the statement that she was at risk of not passing practicum. I felt confident in the way I presented my concerns, and thus decided not to disclose the fact that FS supported my evaluation. PC's responses to the confrontation mirrored the responses that my supervisor and I had anticipated; therefore, I was prepared to address them. Initially, PC stated that she felt as though she had made improvement with regard to these areas and did not share my concerns. As suggested by FS, I showed PC several clips from her video recordings that clearly portrayed the issues I was describing. After watching each clip, I asked PC to consider what her client might be experiencing, which proved to be a difficult task for PC. I modeled this perspective-taking by speaking on behalf of her client: "As the client, I feel unheard. I just said something very important and it was not acknowledged." PC began to admit her clinical struggles and shared how they linked to her family-of-origin experiences, saying that made it difficult to change. This was another response FS and I anticipated. Although these insights were valid, they served to shift the focus from PC's current clinical work to past experiences. I gently directed the discussion back to her performance in practicum and asked what was getting in her way of consistently using her basic counseling skills in session. At this point, PC became tearful and disclosed that she had been unsure as to whether counseling was the right profession for her and she believed this uncertainty might be why she was not performing well. As discussed, I validated PC's experience of uncertainty, discouragement, and fear (thereby modeling what I was asking her to do with clients). I encouraged her to take time to wrestle with these questions pertaining to her professional aspirations, as well as other obstacles that might be getting in the way of her skill development. I offered the assurance that if she wanted to pursue counseling as her profession, I would support her, and reiterated that it would take a lot of work on her part to develop her basic counseling skills. Knowing that this had been an emotionally heavy session, I asked PC to share what she heard from our time together to confirm that there was mutual understanding. At first, PC was unable to articulate my feedback. This gave me another opportunity to directly state the areas in need of improvement in order for PC to pass practicum. She was then able to put my feedback into her own words and confirm that she felt clear about what was required of her.
- *FS*: As planned, DS contacted me soon after the confrontation session to process. She was exhausted ... and proud. Later, in reviewing the session tape, I observed DS as firm, yet caring. Her interest in helping PC be successful was obvious, even to PC. Most

important, DS did not rescue PC despite several “invitations” to do so. I asked DS to share this session in our group supervision, as it was an instructive and powerful model for several of her peers who also were struggling with being direct in giving challenging feedback to their supervisees. In addition, we continued to reflect on what DS had learned from this experience during subsequent sessions, including PC's report of her experience of the confrontation session.

After: Commitment and Growth

- *DS*: After the confrontation in our seventh supervision session, PC turned a corner. In our eighth session, she shared that she had recommitted herself to the counseling program and knew she had a lot of work to do in order to develop her skills. For the remainder of the semester, I witnessed PC's determination, openness to feedback, and desire to learn. There were still challenges and areas for growth, but her attitude and demeanor had changed significantly. As we continued our work together, I learned that confrontation was not a one-time event, but rather a skill integrated into the process of supervision. We faced other instances in which I had to deliver challenging feedback, yet confrontation had become an accepted part of our process. With each delivery of challenging feedback, I felt more comfortable with my skills and PC seemed more receptive. Confrontation was no longer frightening, but rather became another supervisory tool for fostering PC's development and attending to the welfare of her clients. My 14th and final session with PC was one of celebration because we reviewed the extent of her development since the seventh session. As I voiced my perception of her growth as a counselor, PC also expressed pride in her development. She felt a sense of accomplishment and was aware of areas in need of continued development the next semester when she entered internship.

In addition to the notable improvement in her clinical work, PC provided evidence for the effectiveness of our confrontational seventh session in several forums. For example, in her final evaluation of supervision, PC wrote that she learned the most from the confrontation in our seventh supervision session. Furthermore, in our last group supervision session, she shared with her peers that she had an intense supervision experience that semester which “shook” her but served as a turning point in her counseling development. Finally, as we ended our supervisory relationship, PC disclosed that she always felt supported by me, even in the uncomfortable sessions. She acknowledged that her growth stemmed from the discomfort of the seventh session and she found it had the most positive impact. PC recognized the value of experiencing and processing through her own negative emotions in supervision, providing evidence for the value of joining with her clients in their pain so that they might experience growth.

I felt great appreciation for PC because I believe I learned as much from our work together as she did. She invited me into her process where I witnessed the importance of confrontation in beginning counselor development. I also was immensely grateful for my own supervision. Experientially, I learned that confrontation could, in fact, be an act of support. As a result of my experience with FS, the concept of *supportive challenges* became a part of my supervisory paradigm. In the end, both PC and I experienced considerable growth.

- *FS*: *DS*'s experience reflected a pattern throughout my years supervising beginning supervisors about their fears of confrontation. Often, the difficult feedback, even confrontations, they used in supervision sessions, about which they were so anxious and fearful, are the very events that their supervisees later say had the most positive impact for their growth. So I share this observation with beginning supervisors several times, and I encourage more advanced doctoral supervisors to share their own experiences with the new doctoral supervisors. For the most part, however, the doctoral supervisors have to work through this in their individual ways to reach their own epiphanies. Thus, part of supervision of supervision involves figuring out their individual block around being confrontational (for *DS*, wanting to be liked by her supervisee and fearing damage to the supervisory relationship) and what will help them get past that block (for *DS*, connecting with the clients' experiences of not being heard).

Discussion

In this analytic autoethnography, our goal was to explore and examine an in-depth account of confrontation within the context of supervision of supervision. Our narrative included details of and reflections about the events before, during, and after the confrontation as well as our own reflections. In line with the goals of analytic autoethnography, we now offer our reflexive analysis by examining the narrative through the lens of several supervisory models and theories of change.

First, developmental models of supervisor growth (e.g., Stoltenberg et al., 1998; Watkins, 1990, 1993, 1994) are applicable. *DS* experienced many of the struggles postulated in those models and echoed in limited research to date (e.g., Gazzola et al., 2013; Rapisarda et al., 2011). She was anxious, doubted her ability to supervise, continually questioned her assessment of her supervisee's skill level, was unsure whether her expectations were realistic in terms of counselor developmental expectations, and offered constructive feedback in fairly indirect ways. She feared her feedback would damage the relationship and was particularly taken aback at the prospect of informing *PC* that she might not pass practicum. In response, *FS* provided supervision of supervision that reflected recommendations in developmental models (e.g., Watkins, 1994), including a structured environment with direction and instruction, validation, support, and encouragement. Beyond these general descriptions in developmental models, however, the narrative reveals more specific interventions that supported the doctoral supervisor's developmental growth. In this instance, the sequence of interventions were (a) validation (*FS* listened to *PC*'s tape and confirmed *DS*'s assessment); (b) modeling, which not only illustrated the skill but also, over the course of the session, allowed *DS* to experience how confrontation helped create movement and change for her, work through her emotions in response to the confrontation, and come to believe that confrontation could have a positive outcome without damaging the relationship; (c) refocusing *DS*'s attention to the client's experience as a way of propelling her past her block (the epiphany); (d) not only practicing what to say in the confrontation but also anticipating how the supervisee might respond and preparing for each scenario (which included providing the actual words to say as needed); (e) encouraging; and (f) reminding *DS* to calm and focus herself before the session so that she could be present

and observant of her supervisee and able to respond in the moment (i.e., use immediacy). Thus, the events described in the narrative provide concrete examples of how faculty supervisors can use developmentally appropriate interventions to facilitate the growth of confrontation skills in their work with doctoral supervisors.

Second, self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) also seems relevant, because DS clearly doubted her competence as a supervisor. FS's interventions seemed to reflect all four sources of self-efficacy. She intentionally *modeled* confrontation through confronting DS and then provided explicit instruction and guided demonstration by role-playing how to handle PC's potential responses to the confrontation. FS's confrontation certainly caused *physiological* and *affective arousal* in DS (although DS was already in a heightened state of arousal at the beginning of the session), which supports motivation to change, and FS also asked DS to make a plan for calming and focusing herself that morning as a way to manage her anxiety about the confrontation session with PC so it would have limited impact on her ability to think and act in session. Throughout the session, FS offered *social persuasion* through her support and encouragement of DS ("You can do this"; "You've done this before"). Finally, the confrontation event was an opportunity for DS to encounter and overcome obstacles, which are part of a *mastery* experience; DS was introduced to subskills toward mastery of confrontation through the role plays and modeling during supervision of supervision.

Third, the Transtheoretical Model (TTM; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982) is a helpful framework for conceptualizing the process of change in this narrative. The TTM is composed of stages as well as processes contributing to change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). Before her seventh session with PC, DS went to supervision in the *contemplation stage* of change. She knew that a problem existed in her supervisory work with PC, yet remained uncommitted to change. As is typical of those in contemplation, DS was evaluating the pros and cons of making a change. She was aware that doing something different with PC in supervision might serve to facilitate clinical growth, yet a change could come at the cost of the supervisory relationship. Her ambivalence and emotional distress are hallmarks of the contemplation stage of change (Miller, Forcehimes, & Zweben, 2011). One effective change process for those in contemplation is emotional arousal, the aim of which is to evoke an affective response regarding the problem (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 2005). By confronting DS and asking her to consider the experience of PC's clients, FS facilitated the emotional arousal needed to propel DS into the next stage of change. Supervision of supervision, then, addressed issues relevant to the *preparation stage*, which enabled DS to move to the *action stage* in her next supervision session with PC.

Finally, FS was aware of multiple parallel processes when confronting DS about her need to confront PC. FS's in-session thoughts and decisions reflected Doehrman's (1976) findings that resolution of a counselor–client impasse was dependent on resolution of the parallel impasse in supervision. PC's need to be liked by her clients paralleled DS's desire to be liked by her supervisees, as well as FS's desire to be seen as a helpful supervisor who could be trusted. The unspoken message (to the client and to PC) was "we don't have to talk about the hard stuff, at least not directly," which clearly was a message to self as much as to the other person in the dyad. Both DS and PC were stuck, unable to move past their concerns. DS's heightened emotions

about PC's lack of progress and her own inability to create the needed change in PC created a heightened awareness in FS about her need to act differently to help DS act differently. FS essentially used metamodeling (Borders & Brown, 2005) to create a different environment during supervision through her confrontation of DS and to allow DS to experience not only the discomfort of confrontation, as PC would later, but also understand confrontation as a helpful skill and needed intervention.

Pedagogical Implications

This autoethnography highlights the need for specific instruction in providing difficult feedback (Gazzola et al., 2013; Rapisarda et al., 2011). Johnson and Stewart (2008) specifically noted the importance of training in directive skills, including confronting supervisees. As noted by Gazzola et al.'s (2013) participants, practicing supervision is much more complicated than described in broad supervision models, and this is especially true for advanced skills like confrontation. Reading about delivering constructive feedback and confronting is only the first step; supervisor training programs must include modeling opportunities and close, hands-on supervision of supervision, based on review of actual supervision sessions (Borders, 2010a, 2010b; Rapisarda et al., 2011). As Stoltenberg et al. (1998) noted, working with beginning supervisors “is not a time for laissez-faire supervision” (p. 163).

Similarly, although supervision across beginning supervisors likely has many similarities, based in developmental models (Stoltenberg et al., 1998; Watkins, 1990, 1993, 1994), it appears supervision of supervision is also complicated and nuanced (see also Borders, 2009; Kemer, Borders, & Willse, 2014). In this dyad, DS's epiphany was based in turning her attention to the welfare of her practicum student's clients, which overshadowed her desire to be liked by her supervisee. Supervisors, then, may need to be intentional about identifying a doctoral supervisor's individual barriers with using confrontation (and other developmental growth tasks) as well as the specific motivations for change that speak to that doctoral supervisor.

Similar to Grant et al.'s (2012) experts' reports, confrontation of PC became necessary when DS's relational (e.g., model, validate, normalize) and reflective (e.g., monitoring) interventions were unsuccessful in changing PC's behavior. Thus, supervisor educators may want to teach this sequence of addressing supervisee difficulties to doctoral supervisors. In addition, on the basis of our theoretical examination of the results, we found that supervisor educators may want to cover developmental theories, self-efficacy theory, the TTM, and parallel process during didactic instruction and apply them when preparing for and conceptualizing actual supervision sessions. Our analysis also suggests that, at least for some beginning supervisors, explicit, directive, and instructive attention around difficult feedback, especially confrontation, will be needed during supervised supervision. The long-term goal is to help doctoral supervisors learn how to confront and validate supervisees at the same time, as described by experts (Grant et al., 2012) and DS's description of supportive challenges.

Limitations and Future Research

Although our narrative and analysis provide important considerations regarding confrontation in supervision, several limitations exist. First, we examined only three members of the culture

under study, namely, supervision. Studies of other supervision-of-supervision dyads would extend this line of research. Second, all three participants were White women.

Autoethnographies are often used to highlight cultural processes and social phenomenon (Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011). Studies of cross-cultural supervision dyads and triads are needed to identify the cultural elements that influence beginning supervisors' work, the epiphanies that propel them to action around multicultural issues, and the supervisory interventions that support their development. Finally, PC did not participate in creating the narrative detailing the confrontation experience (because of logistical issues), so her perspective was not included.

Regarding future research, autoethnographies detailing confrontations around nonskill issues, such as ethical issues, boundary violations, and respect for diversity, would advance the dialogue around the use of confrontational skills in supervision. In addition, accounts of confrontations that do not go as well, including those that lead to a supervisee being dismissed from a program, would provide contrasting information that would inform supervision education and practice. Narratives of supervisors in various stages of development, ranging from beginners to experts, using confrontation could be particularly instructive. Beyond the skill of confrontation, future researchers also could use autoethnographies to illuminate doctoral supervisors' struggles and needs around other aspects of the supervisory enterprise, such as other types of feedback (challenging and supportive) and evaluation sessions, various supervisory roles (e.g., teacher, counselor, consultant; Bernard, 1979), supervisory techniques (e.g., Interpersonal Process Recall, live supervision, thinking aloud; see Borders & Brown, 2005), multiple modalities (e.g., individual, triadic, and group supervision), and other relatively unexplored events and processes (e.g., conflict in the supervisory relationship). As stated by Gazzola et al. (2013), "having an insider's perspective on how supervisors-in-training regularly negotiate the various demands of the supervision context as they learn to be supervisors can inform us of key learning milestones and mechanisms" (p. 19). Autoethnography, single case study, narratology, and discourse analysis methodologies (see Hays & Singh, 2012) could provide a foundation of individualized accounts from which to build. Such studies would help identify key variables and processes to explore using research designs (qualitative and quantitative) with larger samples so that the process of change across supervisor developmental models, as well as the supervisory interventions that support such growth, can be more clearly identified and described.

Conclusion

This analytic autoethnography provides a coconstructive narrative of events before, during, and after a confrontation experience in a supervision-of-supervision context. Ellis et al. (2011) wrote, "The questions most important to autoethnographers are: who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going?" (p. 284). We hope this in-depth look at one doctoral supervisor-faculty supervisor dyad begins a much needed conversation around helping beginning supervisors confront confrontation.

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