

From Expert to Collaborator: Developing Cultural Competency in Clinical Supervision

Dorbea Cary
Pamela Marques

ABSTRACT. The cultural competency of mental-health professionals is crucial to the provision of necessary and appropriate services to an increasingly multicultural clientele. In a clinical setting, supervisors and supervisees must form a partnership to pursue cultural competency. Through working together, they can use their cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills to benefit the diverse clientele. In this article, the authors share their experiences from teaching a 2-day workshop about cultural competency for supervisors. The goal of the workshop is to enhance supervisors' knowledge and critical thinking, increase their awareness and sensitivity, and further their skill development in pursuit of this partnership with supervisees. doi:10.1300/J001v26n01_10 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2007 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS. Cultural competency, clinical supervision, supervisory relationship, multicultural clientele

INTRODUCTION

A major influx of refugees, immigrants, and non-resident aliens into the United States during the last two decades has changed the demographic

Dorbea Cary, LCSW, and Pamela Marques, PhD, LCSW, are affiliated with California State University, Stanislaus, 801 West Monte Vista Avenue, Turlock, CA 95382.

The Clinical Supervisor, Vol. 26(1/2) 2007
Available online at <http://cs.haworthpress.com>
© 2007 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1300/J001v26n01_10

composition of the population. According to Fong et al. (2001), in the 21st century people of color—First Nations people, Latinos, African Americans, and Asians/Pacific Islanders—will comprise the largest segment in the country. This changing demographic profile poses new issues for mental-health professionals. One of the major challenges is serving an even more culturally diverse clientele with practice modes that are based on monocultural assumptions about normalcy and psychological distress (Brown, 1994). In this situation, the potential for ineffective mental-health services is real. The inability of mental-health professionals to provide treatment within the context of their clients' cultures can result in inadvertent discrimination against diverse people seeking help and in the underutilization of services (Foster, 1998).

Often clinicians just do not know how to provide treatment within the context of their clients' cultures, "the lifestyle practices of particular groups of people who are influenced by a learned pattern of values, beliefs, and behavior modalities" (Lum, 1996, p. 72). This inability reduces the possibility of promoting change (Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1997). Training standards for psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and marriage and family therapists are beginning to address what Foster (1998) called a crisis of competence and conscience in multicultural practice—the therapeutic relationship involving a clinician and client from different cultures. Many professional organizations (e.g., the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association) are now recommending the retraining of mental-health professionals for multicultural practice.

CLINICAL SUPERVISION

Supervision in the clinical setting is one medium for clinicians to learn multicultural practice, that is, to acquire the cultural competency to work with a multicultural staff and clientele. However, the professional literature indicates that most supervisors are not prepared to train their staff in cross-cultural practice (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). For example, in her study, Constantine (1997) found that, whereas 70% of the supervised therapists had received some multicultural training, 70% of the supervisors had received no such training. In another study, Gatmon et al. (2001) found a low frequency of supervisory conversations related to culture. In mental health, there exists "a serious gap in supervisor competence" and an obvious need "for systematic training of

clinical supervisors in the many dimensions of multicultural interactions” (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, p. 118).

California, in particular, is experiencing this serious gap, both in supervisor and clinician competence. The State’s tremendous demographic shifts are fueling this crisis. For example, 29 of the 30 most ethnically diverse communities in the United States are in California (Lum, 1996). In a first effort to address this critical problem of cultural competency, the California Mental Health Planning Council (2002) convened a series of focus groups comprised of Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and African American clinical social workers.

The participants in these groups identified the following points about the cultural competency of supervisors in particular: (1) the inadequate cultural competency of supervisors frequently creates disruptive, negative experiences, not only for a diverse staff, but also for the multicultural clientele receiving services; (2) supervisors must be prepared to work together with a diverse staff and to recognize the varied needs of the multicultural clientele; and (3) the target audience for any training in cultural competency, if even offered by an agency, is usually the staff, which is more likely to be diverse anyway, rather than the supervisors, who are primarily White. These concerns, although voiced by practitioners, have been echoed time and time again by our students doing field practice, an integral part of their graduate program in social work at California State University, Stanislaus.

In this regard, our students reported that they seldom discussed cultural issues or cultural values with their primarily White supervisors. In order to support the field supervisors, we organized a two-day workshop that offers training in cultural competency specifically for them. In this article, we share our experiences from teaching this workshop for the past three years.

BACKGROUND

The workshop for supervisors originally began as an elective course in cultural competency for graduate students, but we decided to transform the course after learning that their field supervisors were not prepared to assist them in working effectively with a multicultural clientele.

On reflection, this situation should not have been surprising. Little in our own education or professional development had prepared us for supervision in a multicultural setting, and we were both seasoned mental-health practitioners. Moreover, as discussed earlier, the professional literature indicates that we are not alone in our limited multicultural training.

Taken together, the research findings and the experiences of our students in field practice tell the same story about the cultural competency of supervisors and convinced us of the need for our workshop. We wanted not only to train supervisors in cultural competency but also to show them how to implement and promote it in their work.

ESTABLISHING A PARTNERSHIP

The duality between the teacher and the taught has to disappear before there can be any understanding.

–Krishnamurti (1981)

A supervisory relationship is inherently multicultural, and cultural similarities and differences impact it. Since culture involves all people, not just disenfranchised or minority groups, it pervades the relationship (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Therefore, when two people meet in supervision, both bring their cultural assumptions, values, beliefs, and behaviors to the interaction. People do not exist in a vacuum; they inhabit numerous intersecting cultural spaces, which are potentially reinforcing or conflicting. In a supervisory relationship, the cultures of both individuals meet, and mutual understanding and respect are necessary.

In clinical supervision, both the supervisor and the supervisee must be open to learning about and from each other. One of the important roles of the supervisor is to engage the supervisee in an alliance—a partnership—to pursue cultural competency. The supervisor must practice and model the fundamental behaviors and values for learning. Working together, they use their cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills to benefit the multicultural clientele. Establishing this partnership poses unique challenges for the supervisor, and we focus the training in our workshop on them.

THE WORKSHOP

Overall Goal and Learning Objectives

We selected the goal and objectives for the workshop based on the literature about what constitutes cultural competency and Kaiser's (1997) model of supervision. The overall goal of our workshop about cultural

competency for supervisors is to enhance their knowledge and critical thinking, to increase their awareness and sensitivity, and to further their skill development. Subsumed under this goal are six specific learning objectives. We want the supervisors to learn (1) how assumptions, biases, and stereotypes affect supervisory practice; (2) how power, authority, trust, and shared meaning influence the supervisory relationship; (3) how they can use the Cultural Context Assessment to facilitate a dialogue about culture; (4) how they can promote empowerment, self-determination, and respect for differences as a model of practice with a multicultural clientele; (5) how they can use cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills to benefit a multicultural clientele; and (6) how they can assess their own level of cultural competency.

Workshop Format

We offered the workshop at several non-profit mental-health agencies at which our graduate students often do their field practice. Supervisors enrolled on a voluntary basis and received continuing education credit for their participation. We limited the number of participants to 30 per workshop. The workshop met for a total of 15 hours, evenly divided between two consecutive days. In addition to our lectures and group discussions during the sessions, we employed other instructional activities, including experiential exercises, vignettes, and role playing, to accomplish our overall goal and to reach our specific learning objectives.

Table 1 outlines the correspondence between the learning objectives and various activities in our workshop.

Workshop: Day One

Morning session. We begin the workshop with an ice breaker, an experiential exercise called the Silent Interview (National MultiCultural Institute, 1997). The supervisors form dyads, and without talking, passing notes, or using gestures, each partner simultaneously “interviews” the counterpart in order to guess his or her favorite song, movie, car, and motto for life. As the exercise progresses, laughter begins to fill the room. During the ensuing discussion, the supervisors are surprised about how often they make assumptions about other people, based solely on physical characteristics such as dress, skin color, age, or hair style.

This fun exercise helps the supervisors to become aware of how they develop their understanding of people whom they perceive as different

TABLE 1. Correspondence Between Learning Objectives and Workshop Activities

Learning Objectives	Workshop Activities*
1. How assumptions, biases, and stereotypes affect supervisory practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Silent Interview (1) • The Privilege Walk (2) • <i>The Way Home</i> video (1) • The Ladder of Inference (1 & 2) • “The Zaks” by Dr. Seuss (2)
2. How power, authority, trust, and shared meaning influence the supervisory relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of research related to importance of supervision (1) • Your experiences as a supervisee (1)
3. How supervisors can use the Cultural Context Assessment to facilitate a dialogue about culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Context Assessment (2)
4. How supervisors can promote empowerment, self-determination, and respect for differences as a model of practice with a multicultural clientele.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cultural Diversity Circle (1) • Multicultural role playing exercises (2)
5. How supervisors can use cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills to benefit a multicultural clientele.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural role playing exercises (2) • Vignettes of supervisory challenges (2) • The Ladder of Inference (1) • Power-sculpting exercise (1)
6. How supervisors can assess their own level of cultural competency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment, using professional standards for cultural competency (1) • Development of action plans (2)

*The number in parentheses following the entry indicates the day on which we conduct the activity.

from themselves. Referring to a handout titled “Ladder of Inference” (Shon, 1987), we lead a discussion about how people can blindly adopt untested beliefs about their world. The Ladder of Inference is a model that describes our mental process of observing situations, drawing conclusions, and taking action. The handout is a drawing of a ladder that graphically depicts the process we use to select data from any given situation, draw conclusions based on that data, and subsequently take action. This mental process takes place within a social context and reflects our values, and our assumptions. What results is a set of beliefs that become the “truth” and serve as lenses or filters through which we interpret our experiences and categorize other people. Supervisors quickly grasp how they have developed some of their biases and stereotypes of other people without questioning the origins and validity of these beliefs.

Next, we introduce Kaiser’s (1997) conceptual model of supervision. Kaiser’s model views the nature of the supervisory relationship as essential to the quality of a supervisee’s work with clients. She identifies

three key components that affect the supervisor-supervisee relationship: the dynamics of power and authority, shared meaning, and trust. In a supervisory relationship, a supervisor must wield his or her power and authority in a fair and appropriate manner vis-à-vis a supervisee. Then a shared meaning can evolve from this equitable treatment. According to Kaiser, shared meaning refers to the mutual understanding that a supervisor and supervisee work out between themselves. Therefore, clarity about the purpose, goals, and objectives of supervision is important. Finally, the evolution of shared meaning gives rise to a bond of trust between the two of them. Without this bond, it is difficult, if not impossible, for a supervisor to deal with any issues in the supervisory relationship that are complicated by cultural contexts and conflicting values.

Time and again throughout the workshop, we elaborate on Kaiser's three key components of the supervisory relationship, especially when analyzing the results from the subsequent experiential exercises, vignettes, and role playing. All three components must be present in a successful working relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee. Moreover, just this kind of supervisory relationship, according to Kaiser, is a prerequisite for the provision of competent service within a mental-health system that deals with a multicultural clientele.

Next we divide the supervisors into small groups so that they can share with each other their own experiences as supervisees. We pose a set of initial questions: How did your supervisor wield power and authority? How did you and your supervisor work out a shared meaning? To what extent were you and your supervisor able to trust each other? The experiences of the supervisors usually fall into one of two categories: Either they can remember in a self-affirming way a relationship that positively affected their lives, or they can still recall every detail of an unforgettable relationship that they would not wish on anyone. A positive result of this exercise is that supervisors rediscover their vulnerabilities from their days as supervisees and feel more empathy for their current supervisees.

We also share with the supervisors some responses to the same set of questions from our students in field practice. A major theme in these responses has been that our students feel vulnerable in the supervisory relationship, particularly when they have had unspoken conflicts with their supervisors. These conflicts persist because shared meaning and trust have not developed in the supervisory relationship.

We conclude the morning session by showing a film, *The Way Home*, produced and directed by Butler (1998). However, before watching the film, we ask the supervisors to remember their own experiences with

and feelings about oppression and privilege, which we will want them to share later in small groups. In the film, women from eight ethnic groups talk about their lives and relate their experiences with oppression and privilege. The women's stories are powerful and evoke some intense reactions among the supervisors about racism, prejudice, and discrimination. A lively discussion usually follows concerning ways to discuss such highly charged issues without criticizing, blaming others, or feeling guilty.

Afternoon session. We begin the afternoon session by asking the supervisors to evaluate their own cultural competency along two dimensions: multicultural skills and self-awareness. With a Likert-type scale, in which 1 stands for minimally skilled and 5 stands for very skilled, the supervisors answer the following questions: What is your ability to use a range of practice strategies in working with a multicultural clientele? What is the extent of your ability to understand how your cultural membership (gender, age, physical appearance, sexual orientation, education, and income status) might affect the supervisory relationship in terms of power and authority, shared meaning, and trust? At this point, we merely want the supervisors to recognize their areas of strength and weakness.

With the realizations from this exercise as a point of reference, we turn our attention to the challenges and conflicts in multicultural supervision. We view the vignette, "Don't You Think I Know Anything?" from the videotape entitled *Challenges in Cross-Cultural Supervision* (Kaiser, Kuechler, & Barretta-Herman, 2000). Our hope is that the subject matter, as presented in the form of a vignette, will strike home with the supervisors. One of our favorite vignettes concerns a White female supervisee who has completed an assessment of a Latino male with depression but has not taken his culture into account. The Latina supervisor disagrees with the assessment and recommendations because she wants more cultural information about the client. The supervisee balks at this suggestion and becomes defensive.

In the first activity inspired by this vignette, we ask the supervisors, now in small groups, to depict the relationship among the client, supervisor, and supervisee in a sculpture composed of the group members. In many cases, the sculptures place the clients in another room or in the corridor (i.e., on the sidelines). This stunning visual statement underscores how the nature of the relationship between a supervisor and supervisee can affect the client.

In the second activity, we ask the supervisors to reflect on the situation portrayed in the vignette and then to play roles incorporating the concepts of power and authority, shared meaning, and trust. Here, we

want supervisors to craft a model of a supervisory relationship that is grounded in reasonable power and authority, in mutual understanding and respect for differences, and in a high degree of trust. Two people enact the scenario while the other group members coach them. Supervisors tell us how easy it is for them to talk about what they would do differently yet how difficult it is for them to express their best intentions in a role-playing scenario.

An experiential exercise, the Cultural Diversity Circle, closes the first day of our workshop. This socio-cultural awareness activity offers another, different opportunity for the supervisors to become acquainted with each other through sharing their points of view, beliefs, and attitudes regarding cultural diversity. The supervisors stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle and, in turn, quickly respond audibly to prompts from us. We try to use mildly provocative prompts such as, “When I think of cultural diversity, I . . .,” and “Two things I would like you to know about me are. . . .” The pace of this energizing activity gently forces the supervisors to be more open about themselves and cultural diversity. As the supervisors are gathering their belongings to leave the room, many comment about what they have experienced during the day and express the sense of a nascent bond with the group.

Workshop: Day Two

Morning session. We introduce the topic for the second day—recognition of multicultural conflicts and their resolution—by reading a children’s story, *The Zaks*. In this story, Dr. Seuss (1989) illustrated the very human trait of clinging to one’s own point of view and refusing to listen to other perspectives. Throughout the day when multicultural conflicts are under discussion, we refer to this story. In this playful way, everyone has a common frame of reference about “being stuck” on points of view.

Our next activity is an experiential exercise called the Privilege Walk (McIntosh, 1988). Supervisors move to one or the other side of the room, according to whether they had ever experienced a privilege accruing from gender, skin color, religion, education, body size, or some other specific social or cultural attribute. After each “walk,” supervisors tell the stories of how they personally benefited from their own privilege(s) or did not fare as well due to the privilege(s) of other people.

This exercise powerfully demonstrates how privilege can affect many interpersonal relationships, especially supervisory ones. At one workshop, White male supervisors hotly contested the notion of White male privilege. In their view, in most situations, affirmative action has leveled

the playing field for minorities; and in the remaining ones, it resulted in a disadvantage for the White males. We listen to their viewpoints but do not try to dispute their contentions. After the workshop, a few of the White male supervisors confided to us that they now better understand the concept of privilege and display less defensiveness about being White and male.

Afternoon session. In the afternoon, we turn our attention to the Cultural Context Assessment (Pedersen, 1997). This questionnaire gathers information about a respondent's cultural affiliations, including nationality, ethnicity, gender, social class, age, education, religion, disabilities, job role, and sexual preference. The Cultural Context Assessment is an excellent tool for establishing a common understanding about cultural identities in an interpersonal relationship, especially a supervisory one. The Cultural Context Assessment suggests that the following cultural components be included in the assessment: nationality, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, education, disabilities, and religion.

We ask the supervisors to form dyads by picking someone whom they do not know very well. To start, one member acts as the supervisor and the other as the supervisee, and then they switch roles. This exercise helps the supervisors to examine their feelings and any uncertainties about asking questions that might, on the surface, seem too personal or might deal with possibly taboo subjects. We provide the following tips for engaging the supervisees in a dialogue about their cultural identities: (1) Explain the purpose of the assessment; (2) Assure that the information will be kept confidential; (3) Ask open-ended questions; (4) Be curious and respectful; (5) Assume a "not-knowing" attitude; (6) Seek to understand; and (7) Have fun. In order to desensitize the use of the Cultural Context Assessment, we share with the supervisors our own cultural identities as portrayed by a self-assessment with this tool.

I (Pamela) am a middle-aged Mexican American woman who grew up in a small agricultural town in Southern California, where most of the residents were first-generation Dutch, Japanese, or Portuguese. I heard several languages (Spanish, Portuguese, and English) spoken in our home and the homes of our relatives. I spent most of my formative years with my mother's family, and I have always identified with my mother's Mexican culture rather than with the Portuguese side of our family.

Our family, the families of most of our friends, and our neighbors were working-class Catholics. My parents, like most in our town, had not graduated from high school. They were hard working and wanted to

succeed in this land of opportunity. They yearned for their children to fulfill their dreams of becoming middle-class Americans.

From conversations with my mother, I learned about discrimination and hatred based on cultural membership. She would often tell me about reading offensive signs, such as “No dogs or Mexicans allowed,” in the windows of stores and restaurants. When she worked as a housekeeper, she would tell her employers that she was Spanish and not Mexican. Since her skin was light, she was able to keep her secret and avoid some of the pain stemming from her heritage.

By the time that I was a teenager, I had already developed an inner strength for dealing with the consequences of being Mexican American. But that part of my cultural identity became less significant when I discovered that I was gay. That self-discovery profoundly affected my life. I kept my gayness a secret because I was afraid and confused. I needed support and acceptance, but I did not know how these needs could be met in what seemed like an unaccepting and even hostile environment. My life was fraught with loneliness and depression because I had no one with whom to talk about my feelings and experiences.

In my current cultural identity, I consider myself to be Mexican American and gay. Furthermore, I am happy to say that, as I have matured into middle adulthood, I have found many ways to meet my needs for support and acceptance. My cultural identity has changed in other respects: I am now middle class and a professional. I am fulfilling my parents’ dream of what success means in America.

I (Dorbea) am a middle-aged, heterosexual woman with WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) background. I was born and raised in Northern California. My family was middle class, and I consider myself a beneficiary of “White privilege.” I grew up in predominately White neighborhoods, lived in the suburbs, went to primarily White schools, and attended a Presbyterian church. My parents paid for my college, graduate education, and even my first car. I have had few barriers along my career path in social work.

Like all parents, mine conveyed certain stereotypes about people. For example, they distrusted people of color, particularly Blacks and Asians. My first encounter with diversity was in college. In my social-work classes, I learned about inequity and oppression. Growing up in the sixties, I was ready to question many of the beliefs and attitudes of my parents and their generation. My older sister brought home, literally and figuratively, the divisiveness of diversity; she married a Black man during a time when inter-racial marriage was not socially acceptable.

My father has never blessed this marriage and is estranged from my sister and her family.

As I have matured, my cultural identity has developed. My background and life experiences have shaped an enduring passion for promoting social justice and for teaching others about diversity. As a mental-health professional, I recognize that I must be clear about my own cultural identity and share it with my colleagues. Many of my coworkers are White professionals who are reluctant to recognize their own cultural identities and their many beliefs and values. They are not ready to acknowledge the impact of who they are on what they do.

After sharing our cultural identities in the workshops, we trust that the supervisors are ready to complete the Cultural Context Assessment. From our perspective, openly discussing cultural identities is essential to the development of a safe, respectful supervisory relationship that genuinely acknowledges cultural differences. In the well-developed supervisory relationship, supervisees can learn how to ask appropriate questions about their clients' cultural identities.

Some supervisors have difficulty with completing this exercise. Perhaps they have internalized the laws of Affirmative Action regarding questions about age, sexual preference, religion, etc. (i.e., what information social workers can collect). In one workshop, a supervisor refused to complete this exercise because of a concern about possible violation of these policies and regulations. Other supervisors tell us that they do not explore certain matters with their supervisees: sexual preference, religion, or disabilities. We respect their decisions, but we encourage them to reflect critically on the reasons for their decisions and on the possible consequences for the supervisory relationship and the quality of service provided to a multicultural clientele.

With assessment of cultural identity still on everyone's mind, the supervisors are ready for a role-playing exercise about the resolution of a conflict that one of them had experienced in a supervisory relationship. At the end of the afternoon session on the first day, we had asked each supervisor to submit a brief description of a real-life conflict infused with multicultural overtones. One time we chose a conflict between a White female supervisor and her male Asian supervisee. While under supervision, the supervisee repeatedly changed his work hours because he held another part-time job with an erratic work schedule. When the supervisor pointed out the problems created for her and the clientele by these changes, the supervisee went over the supervisor's head and complained to the manager about his supervisor's unfairness and lack of flexibility. We asked the supervisors to integrate Kaiser's components of the

supervisory relationship with the assessment of cultural identity when they role played the analysis and resolution of this challenging conflict.

We conclude the workshop by asking the supervisors to break into dyads one last time for two activities. First, we want their responses to three questions: What was the most important thing I learned? How can I, as a supervisor, use this new knowledge to help my supervisees to provide better services to a multicultural clientele? How can I, as a supervisor, manage the provision of services by a multicultural staff with a multicultural clientele? The supervisors reassemble to share their responses.

Second, back in their dyads the supervisors “brainstorm” about what more they can do to enhance their cultural competency. How can they learn more about the cultural identities of their clients and staff? How can they become more skilled in working with multicultural staff serving multicultural clients? We bring the supervisors together so that everyone can hear each other’s hopes and strategies.

EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

To evaluate the workshop, we use a vignette for a qualitative pretest and posttest. The situation is about Pheng, a Hmong man who works in a mental-health agency. He is torn between serving the Hmong community and following agency policies. Both before and after the workshop, we ask the supervisors to answer the following questions: (1) How would you approach developing shared meaning between you (the supervisor) and Pheng (the supervisee) as well as between Pheng and his Hmong clients? (2) What are the dynamics of power and authority in this cross-cultural situation? and (3) How might you, the supervisor, and Pheng, the supervisee, be feeling in this situation? Through comparing the responses to these questions on the pretest and posttest, we learn about the effect of the training on how the supervisors would likely handle a cross-cultural situation.

To interpret the responses we followed Neuman’s (2003) five-part plan for qualitative analysis. We read through the responses on the pretest and posttest and highlighted various themes. Then, we reviewed the responses a second time in order to double check our grasp of highlighted themes and to categorize them into several broad areas for an assessment of the training. Once we had identified these areas, we coded the responses on the pretest and posttest for similarities and differences in the respective areas. Three main themes emerged from the

responses: valuing the supervisory relationship, understanding cultural influences, and facilitating dialogue and discovery.

Valuing the Supervisory Relationship

The responses of the supervisors in the pretest suggest that they sometimes see themselves merely as expert problem solvers. Their responses in the posttest show more value on the supervisory relationship itself. The supervisors use more words and phrases about building and maintaining this relationship: developing trust, sharing experiences, developing shared meaning, and collaborating with supervisees. For example, one supervisor wrote, "I would use some of the materials from the training to begin to share, build trust, and develop shared meaning as to what we plan to do together, what our roles are with each other." In addition, supervisors emphasize the need to validate the relationship for the supervisees by inviting open discussion, recognizing concerns, asking more questions, and learning about their cultures. As another supervisor noted, "I would acknowledge his feelings and frustration, commenting on his empathy for the people he serves, and encourage him to continue to volunteer this information. I would be feeling excited to look at other ways of doing things."

Understanding Cultural Influences

Of particular interest in the supervisors' responses in the posttest is a new, fresh awareness of the need to understand their supervisees' cultures before turning to solutions to the problems at hand. The supervisors express a readiness to explore the impact of supervisees' cultures at multiple levels: the supervisory relationship, the point-of-service relationship, and the agency-community relationship. "Supervisor[s] can have more power if supervising allows Pheng to discuss cultural differences." "Pheng has much cultural knowledge which could be shared with the supervisor for the good of the program and clients." "I would definitely use supervision as an opportunity to gain more knowledge about the Hmong culture and problem solve [sic] a way of dealing with the agency's rules." The supervisors realize that cultural heritage still influences the type, tractability, and resolution of problems at all levels. Although the supervisors now mention the use of the Cultural Context Assessment, they continue to focus on ethnicity and gender as the primary, most powerful determinants.

Facilitating Dialogue and Discovery

A comparison of the supervisors' responses from the pretest and posttest reveals that the workshop tends to reinforce their sense of responsibility for making the supervisory relationship a more empathetic, collaborative learning experience. "It [the supervisory relationship] becomes a collaboration to identify barriers and [a] means to overcome them." From their posttest responses, it is clear that the supervisors are more determined to **facilitate dialogue and discovery with their supervisees**. One supervisor expressed interest in using one of the workshop tools to establish rapport and improve communication. "Well, hopefully we would have already developed a good base by using the Cultural Context Assessment. Pheng could also be utilizing his in a way to increase understanding with his clients."

LOOKING BACK TO GO FORWARD

Our workshop about cultural competency offers a safe, supportive, and trusting place for supervisors to build on past successes, to become current in the field, and to prepare for the struggles down the road. Each time we conduct the workshop, we review the supervisors' evaluations to learn what is and is not working. Although each workshop is unique to each group of supervisors, we find some points in common and are able to improve what we are doing. We refine the exercises so they are more understandable to the supervisors, and we juggle the sequencing of exercises to improve the flow of the workshop.

The comments from the supervisors' evaluations have provided invaluable feedback to us. Their remarks have confirmed that the variety of our teaching modalities—experiential exercises, vignettes, videos, and role plays—have engaged them. The supervisors appreciate the parallel process that occurs during the course of the workshop: By the way we handle issues and conflicts arising in the workshop, we are demonstrating how they can deal with similar difficulties with their supervisees. One supervisor wrote, "Thank you for stretching us outside our comfort zones; because of this I learned more." The supervisors acknowledge the honesty, open-mindedness, and "down-to-earth" qualities of us, their instructors.

Supervisors often lack opportunities to network with other supervisors and to discuss their work. In this sense, the workshop provides a forum for the supervisors to discuss conflicting values and biases, to share their cultural identities, and to reflect on issues and conflicts in their

work. Participating in the workshop is a validating experience for the supervisors.

Supervisors are in a position within an agency to set the example for practice with a multicultural clientele. Supervisors with cultural competency can model the appropriate behavior for their staff and supervisees when true partnerships exist among them. Different cultural identities can flourish in a supervisory relationship founded on reasonable power and authority, shared meaning, and trust. Moreover, this diversity can potentially broaden the scope of services offered by an agency and enrich the quality of them. A multicultural citizenry is the ultimate beneficiary.

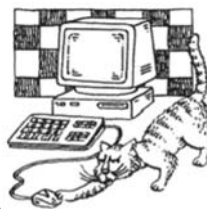
REFERENCES

- Bernard, J. M., & Goodyear, R. K. (2004). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brown, L. S. (1994). *Subversive dialogues: Theory in feminist therapy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Butler, S. (Producer/Director). (1998). *The way home* [Motion picture]. (Available from World Trust Educational Services, 8115 McCormick Ave., Oakland, CA 94605).
- California Mental Health Planning Council. (2002). *Human resources pilot ethnic focus group project: Summary of recommendations*. Sacramento, CA.
- Constantine, M. G. (1997). Facilitating multicultural competency in counseling supervision: Operationalizing a practical framework. In D. B. Pope-Davis and H. L. K. Coleman (Eds.), *Multicultural counseling competencies: Assessment, education and training, and supervision* (pp. 310–324). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dr. Seuss. (1989). *The Sneetches and other stories*. New York: Random House.
- Fong, R., Furuto, S., & Furuto, S.B. (2001). *Culturally competent practice: Skills, interventions, and evaluations*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Foster, R.P. (1998). *The power of language in the clinical process: Assessing and treating the bilingual person*. Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson Publishers.
- Hubble, M. A., Duncan, B. L., & Miller, S. D. (1997). *The heart & soul of change: What works in therapy*. Washington, D.C: American Psychological Association.
- Kaiser, T. L. (1997). *Supervisory relationships*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.
- Kaiser, T. L., Kuechler, C. F., & Barretta-Herman, A. (Producers). (2000). *Challenges in cross-cultural supervision*. [Motion picture]. (Available from College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105).
- Krishnamurti, J. (1981). *Education and the significance of life*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Lum, D. (1996). *Social work practice and people of color: A process stage approach*. (3rd ed.). Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). Working Paper 189. *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Wellesley College, MA.

- Nile, L. N. (1997, May). *The silent interview*. Workshop conducted at the meeting of the National MultiCultural Institute, Washington, D.C.
- Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Basics of social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Pedersen, P. B. (1997). *Culture-centered counseling interventions: Striving for accuracy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schon, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

doi:10.1300/J001v26n01_10

**Get Articles *FAST* with
the Haworth Document
Delivery Service and Rightslink®**



To request single articles from Haworth, visit www.HaworthPress.com/journals/dds.asp. You can order single articles here directly from Haworth or through Rightslink®. We have over 40,000 articles ready for immediate delivery, and you can find articles by title, by author name, by keyword, and more!

RIGHTSLINK 
Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright of Clinical Supervisor is the property of Haworth Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.