

The Effects of Clinical Supervision on Therapeutic Care

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Clinical supervision provides the opportunity to integrate various cognitive and affective aspects of a therapist's work. In mental health settings, clinical supervision may not be optimum due to various conditions and organizational structures which exist in many of today's mental health agencies. A study of five clinical therapists from a leading mental health agency conveyed their experiences through clinical supervision in personal interviews, observational studies, and completion of a survey. Results of the interviews revealed that clinical supervision involved the following topical areas: personal meaning, individual experience, common themes and topics, personal expectations, and applicability to work with clients.

The responses of the survey resulted in domains ranging from personal and professional goals, expectations, strengths, and suggestions for restructuring (See Table below).

Future study in clinical supervision should continue to investigate the contributing factors on therapeutic care so that the endeavors of the mental health field will foster improved quality of life for the clients and for the providers.

Responses and Domain Categories for Survey Results

<i>Goal of Question</i>	<i>Informant Response</i>	<i>Domain</i>
1. Effectiveness	"Supportive...enables growth, learning...a process of processing...timely..."	Acquisition of skills; examination of the "self" in therapeutic relationship
2. Qualities of Supervisor	"Knowledgeable...empathic...encouraging, motivating...a good listener..."	Qualities consistent with what supervisee is seeking to enhance in him/herself
3. Qualities of Therapist	"Empathic, good listener... non-judgmental... supportive, but challenging... encourages growth... intuitive..."	Qualities consistent with what supervisee is seeking to enhance in him/herself
4. Benefits of Current Employment	"Trainings, workshops... TEAM support...agency orientation...increase in clinical knowledge..."	Instruments by which one's professional knowledge-base may be enhanced
5. Previous Experiences with Clinical Supervision	"Others lacked the ability to give me new ideas... 'mechanical', if you will...openness was not an option...more 'CYA' than true processing or learning..."	Inconsistency with previously discussed definitions, as well as with current supervision experience