

**Discussion Thread: Leadership in Supervision**

Counseling uses a mentoring model in training, relying on the guidance of an experienced clinician to guide the development of new counselors. This is why we are not only required to receive supervision during the field experiences (practicum and internship) in our training program but also post graduate supervision for licensure. As noted in Chapter 11, one responsibility that we have in supervision is to train counselors to be effective leaders and advocates. Yet, given that leadership and advocacy has historically not been stressed in training programs, and given the wide range of professional identities held by those supervising counselors, it is easy to see how this is too often not a focus of supervision. This is where we can be the agents of change as we move forward. This is an area that could be a place for you to exercise leadership and advocacy. For this discussion:

- Reflect and discuss the role that supervisors have in training professional counselors.
- Does the present state OR your experiences of supervision actually develop leadership and advocacy skills?
- As a leader, how can you provide support and advocate for the integration of these skills in supervision?

You can use your own experiences, however, please do so respectfully in those cases where you did not receive effective supervision. In other words, no supervisor bashing. Rather, simply discuss the content in a thoughtful manner. You do not need to specifically answer each of the below questions. Instead, you will present a synthesis or result of your processing of the questions as all of these are interrelated when discussing the topic.

Initial Post

As with most new things that humans set out to accomplish, there are learning curves and things a person will be confident in and thrive at, while other areas will be more obscure and challenging. Having a supervisor to help mentor a person in training will give the learner a lifeline to build confidence and will also help to keep the areas where they are confident in check. However, this skill typically does not just happen but is taught. Our text says on page 177, “The assumption that well-trained professional counselors can easily translate counseling skills into effective supervision is an inaccurate and potentially misleading notion.” This helps to clear up that specific training is needed to help counselors make the connection and to be well

equipped to be successful in these important areas of the counseling profession. The present state and my personal experiences with supervision often includes leadership and advocacy skills being taught by implication but not as an explicit attribute that is being intentionally reenforced. It appears supervisor training programs need to also implement a more direct teaching regarding leadership and advocacy. When I am in the role of an instructor for counseling students, I hope to provide encouragement to be involved in leadership and advocacy efforts by planting the seeds that this is not only something future counselors should participate in actively but should also be sharing with others in the field the admonition to get engaged with leadership and advocacy and especially sharing the admonition when serving in the role of a supervisor.

Chang, Catherine Y.; Barrio Minton, Casey A.. Professional Counseling Excellence through Leadership and Advocacy (p. 177). (Function). Kindle Edition.

First Response

Posted by: Carly Rowan February 4, 2025, 12:36 am

Supervisors play an essential role in training professional counselors. I had such a fantastic supervisor who truly mentored me. She now works at Liberty, and she is why I applied to the CES program at the university. I am grateful for my experience, but I know that not everyone is as fortunate as I am to have had the same experience. I learned a lot about self-advocacy and advocating for my clients under supervision. Since I work with children and adolescents,

advocating for their needs is an important part of counseling. This often is just helping them advocate their needs to their parents. In Texas, LPCs must wait five years after being fully licensed before they can supervise. Due to this, individuals may have challenges finding a supervisor who meets their needs, and many LPCs want to supervise but are unable to yet. I can help empower those I supervise to feel confident when they need to lead or advocate for those around them. I would never want a supervisee to miss out on an opportunity to do so because they were not confident enough to do so. Being under supervision is the ideal time for them to learn how to do so because they are not doing it alone and have the support of their supervisor.

### **Response**

What a blessing that you felt your supervisor was so wonderful! I too really appreciate my supervisor. I am sure it has indeed been valuable to have been mentored to self-advocate and to advocate for others. It is a blessing to help to empower those who often feel powerless through the process of advocating for and with them. Similarly, it is a blessing to motivate and encourage future counselors to be empowered to see they have the ability and skill to work in leadership roles and to advocate for themselves, their clients, and their profession. I agree that helping our supervisees to take on leadership roles and to advocate while in supervision can also set them up for long-term success.

### Second Response

Posted by: Hillary Marker February 3, 2025, 4:49 pm

Supervisors have a pivotal role in training professional counselors. Above and beyond ensuring that counselors-in-training are providing ethical and effective counseling services, supervisors are also entrusted with assisting their supervisees in growing their professional identity. An essential and often overlooked element of this is empowering supervisees to recognize advocacy needs and to become advocates themselves. Reflecting on my supervision experiences as a supervisee, I can name limited times when my supervisor dedicated supervision time to discussing advocacy. In my role now as a supervisor to interns and limited-licensed counselors and as a consultant to our fully licensed counselors, advocacy is a topic that often comes up. From my experiences on both sides of the supervisor-supervisee relationship, I believe it is easier for a supervisor or consultant to recognize advocacy needs as the counselor is often too “zoomed into” the problem to see the need for advocacy. As a result, some form of advocacy frequently comes up in my supervision and consultation meetings. (This has reinforced the value of receiving my own consultation to ensure that I am not ignoring advocacy needs with my clients). In the supervision/consultation I provide, I have been incorporating this more regularly by inviting my supervisees to slow down in the supervision meetings, “zoom out,” and glean a broader perspective of the situation, what the client needs, and the role the counselor can play in this need. A practical skill I learned from this chapter that I want to begin using to bolster this effect is the Counselor Cognitions Questionnaire (CCC; p. 185).

Response

Hillary

What a valuable aspect of supervising that you have pointed out and reminded us of the responsibility to help our supervisees to intentionally develop their professional identity. It is important to talk about what advocacy may look like because it turns out we do not know what we do not know. I like the judicious way you shared the limited mentioning of advocacy by your supervisor. It sounds like you learned from your limited exposure to help your supervisees to be better equipped than you were. Another excellent point is the observation you shared that counselors can be too “zoomed into” the problem to see the need to advocate and that you help your supervisees to slow down and “zoom out” to consider how they can best serve their counselees.