DECONSTRUCTING & OWNING POWER IN SUPERVISION

TEXAS SUPERVISION SYMPOSIUM
BREAKOUT SESSION

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SESSION OBJECTIVES:

• Discuss early career supervisor identity as an influence on the use (and perception of use) of power in clinical supervision

• Consider impact of the current sociopolitical climate and its relationship to experiences of power in clinical supervision

• Understand importance and benefit of deconstructing and owning power in the provision of clinical supervision
SOCIOPOLITICAL CLIMATE: GENERATIONAL IMPACT
(APA, 2018)

• Gen Zs (15-21) least likely age group to describe mental health as “excellent” or “very good”

• Millennials (22-39) highest reports of stress among adults surveyed

• Work, money and health among top stressors for Gen Zs

• Gen Zs are more stressed than overall adults by national news (mass shootings, sexual harassment, family separation and deportation, suicide rates, etc.)

• 3 in 4 Gen Zs and 7 in 10 Millennials report concern about gun violence
THE COMPLEXITY OF POWER (ANCIS & MARSHAL, 2010)

• Supervisors have higher social status, though moderated by internalized inferiority and superiority.

• Collaboration is often used to manage tension that emerges from the realities of evaluation, gatekeeping and client well-being.

• Feminist, multicultural supervisors cultivate a social justice framework through:
  • Deconstruction of past personal, training and professional experiences (often shaped by oppression, privilege and power).
  • Authentic, vulnerable and in-the-moment exploration of expectations, boundaries and needs.
  • Valuing diverse perspectives, approaches and feedback received from supervisee.
  • Being attuned to the ways that power is related to developmental nature of supervision and training.
  • Critical consciousness related to social status, biases and impact of power.
  • Counterbalancing impact of context (external influences and systemic change).
POWER DYNAMICS IN SUPERVISION SCALE (COOK, MCKIBBEN & WIND, 2018)

• Supervisees perceive themselves holding most power in:
  • Maintaining health boundaries with supervisors
  • Willingness to feel vulnerable in supervision
  • Feeling empowered in supervision

• Supervisees perceive their supervisors holding most power in:
  • Identifying interventions to use with clients
  • Setting goals for supervision
  • Providing feedback about clinical skills in supervision
GENDER RELATED EVENTS (BERTSCH ET. AL., 2014)

• Emerging GREs categorized as gender-related discrimination, gender identity interactions, attraction and power dynamics
  • Focusing on therapeutic process, exploration of supervisees’ feelings, skill building and self-efficacy (most frequently noted interventions) facilitated improved self-awareness, knowledge, skills and supervisory alliance
  • Gender discrimination was only gender-related-event that had a significant, negative relationship to supervisees’ perception of supervisory working alliance and gender-based cultural competence
    • Women identified trainees “relinquish power because of supervisors’ tendency to withhold support in situations when supervisees attempt to assert power”
INTERSECTIONALITY, POWER & RELATIONAL SAFETY
(HERNÁNDEZ & MCDOWELL, 2010)

“We use the term colonialism to refer to the promotion of dominant group (i.e., colonizer) ideologies, beliefs, and cultural practices for the purpose of maintaining centered positions of cultural, social, and economic capital. Those in power institutionalize their cultural capital transforming it into social capital to secure societal resources and influence. Indigenous and diverse life ways are devalued, marginalized, and associated with low cultural capital. Without active interruption, this breeds a lateral pattern of establishing social capital networks and a perpetual intergenerational inheritance of social influence and access to resources. This results in long term, entrenched systems that continue to maintain colonial agendas… Colonization results in dominant cultural practices being thought of as “normal,” therefore preferred and right. In the case of helping professions, these include Euro-centered theories and practices as well as established social hierarchies based on systems of privilege and oppression… A critical postcolonial lens differs from the multicultural perspective in its analysis of power, privilege, and oppression, and their interconnectedness. These concepts are central to unveiling the ways in which structural oppression shapes interpersonal relationships and mental health… A critical postcolonial lens goes beyond a multicultural perspective (i.e., understanding cultural differences and working cross culturally) to offer a framework anchored in the analysis of hierarchies of power, privilege, and oppression that create intersectionalities of life experience shaping the wellbeing of individuals and communities.”
INTERSECTIONALITY, POWER & RELATIONAL SAFETY
(HERNÁNDEZ & MCDOWELL, 2010)

• Identities and context create both ease and obstacle in navigating supervisory experiences.

• Power through social and cultural capital of supervisee and supervisor matters and must be interrogated.

• The broader context within which supervision occurs also shapes the possibilities (and outcomes) of supervision.

• Supervisee development and growth is dependent on creation of mutual challenge and collaboration- a relational safety that evolves over time.
IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF & CENTER

GROUP DISCUSSION, CRITICAL ANALYSIS & CONSULTATION
SUMMARY

• Name one consideration for early career supervisors with regard to deconstructing and owning power in supervision.

• Name one implication the sociopolitical climate has for owning and deconstructing power in supervision.

• Name one way that power manifests in the supervisory relationship

• What is an additional question you have about the importance and benefit of owning and deconstructing power in supervision?
REFERENCES


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
