



Multicultural counselling supervision: A four-step model toward competency

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Abstract. Multicultural elements and issues are a vital part of effective counselling supervision. However, traditional counselling supervision has not provided a conceptual framework that integrates multicultural issues. The purpose of this paper is to provide a four-step model for the development of multiculturally competent counsellors. The four-step model includes: (a) developing cultural awareness of the counselling supervisor; (b) exploring the cultural dynamics of the counselling supervisory relationship; (c) examining the cultural assumptions of traditional counselling theories; and (d) integrating multicultural issues into existing models of supervision.

Despite a recent study of public school counsellors which found that multicultural supervision was significantly related to self-perceptions of multicultural counselling competencies (Robinson, 1997), little is known about the specific impact of various cultural factors on individual counselling supervision relationships (Cook & Helms, 1988). Yet if the distinguishing cultural characteristics of both the counselling supervisor and the counsellor-in-training are acknowledged, all counselling supervision is multicultural (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996). Much of the previous literature on multicultural counselling supervision has outlined conceptual models and theories that lack empirical evidence for their assertions. Most of the empirical research that does exist has historically emphasized only the variable of race or ethnicity when defining the existence of a multicultural counselling supervision relationship (Leong & Wagner, 1994).

Midgette and Meggert (1991) questioned whether counselling supervisors were familiar with multicultural issues in working with their own clients, while Bernard (1992) asserted that if counselling supervisors had not taken course work in multicultural counselling or counselling supervision, they would have difficulty providing competent multicultural counselling experience. D'Andrea and Daniels (1997) similarly contended that counsellors-in-training are likely to have a greater understanding of cultural factors

influencing the counselling relationship and counselling supervision process than their counselling supervisors.

Constantine (1997) reported thirty percent of interns and seventy percent of counselling supervisors indicated they had never completed a multicultural counselling course. These statistics are troubling especially since counselling supervisors lacking skills to work with clients from diverse populations may inadvertently harm both counsellors-in-training and clients. If the majority of counselling supervisors have had no formal training in multicultural counselling, it can be postulated that counselling supervisors frequently do not address cultural issues with counsellors-in-training they supervise. Robinson (1997) reported that one study revealed that only 24.5% of public school counsellors had experienced multicultural counselling supervision. In addition, counselling supervisors and interns reported spending an average of nearly 15% of their counselling supervision time discussing multicultural issues. Interestingly, respondents indicated that if they had an opportunity to spend more time discussing cultural issues, their counselling supervision experience would have been enhanced.

The purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual framework for multicultural counselling supervision. Traditional counselling supervision theory evolved from early counselling practices that largely ignored multicultural issues. The perspectives of multicultural counselling supervision, as described in this paper, are built on the belief that the inclusion of the needs of persons from diverse groups in counselling supervision is imperative. Counselling supervision is therefore viewed as a multifaceted process, whose major objective is to supervise or oversee the work of the counsellor-in-training in an effort to increase the counsellor-in-training's effectiveness. An important question is: how can we ensure that counselling supervision incorporates culturally diverse issues rather than ignoring them? This paper outlines a four-step model for developing competent multicultural counselling supervisors. The four steps are: (a) developing cultural awareness of the counselling supervisor; (b) exploring the cultural dynamics of the counselling supervisory relationship; (c) examining the cultural assumptions of traditional counselling theories; and (d) integrating multicultural issues into existing models of counselling supervision.

Cultural awareness of counselling supervisors

The first step of competent multicultural counselling supervision is helping counselling supervisors develop an awareness of how cultural issues impact on the counselling process. The beginning of developing an awareness of how culture impacts on the counselling process is becoming aware of one-

self as a cultural being in the counselling supervision process (McCrae & Johnson, 1991). Stone (1997) postulates that culturally effective counselling supervisors have an awareness of how they are different from individuals from other cultures as well as of how strongly they affiliate with their own cultural group, and how this affiliation affects interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Without an awareness of one's own cultural beliefs, cultural encapsulation can intrude into both the counselling supervision relationship and the counselling process (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996). Counselling supervisors must be aware of how their cultural heritage impacts on their definitions of normality, the process of counselling, and the counselling supervisory relationship (Sue et al., 1992). Counselling supervisors who develop an awareness of their own culture must engage in self-examination of traditional questions of locus of control and locus of responsibility (Sue, 1978), as well as understanding their own perceptions of time, human nature, and social relationships (Ibrahim, 1985).

In addition, counselling supervisors must seek out information about cultural groups which affect the counselling supervisor's world view, the counsellor-in-training's world view, and the client's world view. Counselling supervisors can learn about other world cultures through reading literature or through interactive approaches, such as immersion experiences (Anderson & Cranston-Gingras, 1991). Becoming more knowledgeable about other cultural groups will enhance the counselling supervisor's ability to address cultural issues with the counsellor-in-training and may help alleviate emotional discomfort for counselling supervisors working with culturally different counsellors-in-training (Cook & Helms, 1988).

Finally, counselling supervisors should continue to develop awareness of their own culture and other cultures through utilizing counselling supervisory consultation. Part of the process of developing multicultural counselling supervision competence is the realization that consultation with other counselling supervisors and with colleagues who have a greater fund of multicultural expertise is beneficial (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996). In addition, counselling supervisors should consult with "cultural ambassadors" who are acknowledged role models in their communities, such as religious leaders, political representatives, and elderly persons (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1997).

Cultural dynamics of the counselling supervisory relationship

The second step of competent multicultural counselling supervision is counselling supervisors having an understanding of how cultural dynamics between the counselling supervisor and counsellor-in-training impact on the counselling supervisory relationship. Effective multicultural counselling

supervision focuses on the process between the counselling supervisor and counsellor-in-training rather than the issue focus so prevalent in traditional models of counselling supervision (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996). Perhaps the focus on client issues in part resulted from a feeling of a more comfortable, less anxious environment; in reality this focus may result in the omission of the exploration of important cultural issues (Remington & DaCosta, 1989). Clearly, effective multicultural counselling supervision encourages counsellors-in-training to assess their own world views while simultaneously assessing the worldview of their clients (Sue, 1978).

In addition, effective multicultural counselling supervision allows for the use of new and creative counselling supervisory interventions. The culturally effective counselling supervisor will be able to generate a wide repertoire of counselling supervisory skills and interventions appropriate to the counsellor-in-training's skill level and worldview (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996). Utilizing creative counselling supervisory interventions will help facilitate and model for the counsellor-in-training the possible ways the counsellor-in-training can intervene effectively with culturally diverse clients. Hopefully, the counselling supervisor's use of creative techniques will serve as a model for the counsellor-in-training concerning ways to develop new techniques to meet the needs of culturally different clients (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996).

Counselling supervision has traditionally been based on an inherent power differential between counselling supervisor and counsellor-in-training (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1997), and issues of power and dominance have often been ignored in helping theories (Sue et al., 1996). The counselling supervisor needs to be aware of the dynamics of power in the relationship with the counsellor-in-training. "Because power differences influence each group's view of itself and others, multicultural counselling theory recognizes the importance of the differences among culturally defined groups" (Sue et al., 1996, p. 25). The effect of being a member of a dominant or nondominant cultural group will impact how the counsellor-in-training interprets the counselling supervisor's power in the relationship. The counselling supervisor may want to explore a counselling supervisory approach that is more equalitarian if the power differential in the counselling supervisory relationship is hindering the professional development of the counsellor-in-training.

Developing an alternative approach to traditional counselling supervision will involve the counselling supervisor helping the counsellor-in-training explore, in addition to the role of counsellor, the roles of advisor, advocate, facilitator of indigenous support systems, facilitator of indigenous healing systems, consultant, and change agent. According to Atkinson, Thompson, and Grant (1993), the role of adviser involves assisting clients in problem solving, informing them of available options, and helping them explore

actions which have been effective in similar situations. As an advocate, the counsellor provides a voice for clients who are unable to speak for themselves and works to influence social policy to create healthy communities. Culturally relevant counselling recognizes the effectiveness of working as a facilitator of indigenous support systems such as extended families, community elders, and religious support groups, and implies that the counsellor must have knowledge of indigenous support systems and an ability to access these support systems.

Exploration of cultural implications of traditional theories

Once the cultural dynamics of the counselling supervisory relationship have been explored, the supervisor can then assist the counsellor-in-training in exploring the cultural limitations and contributions of traditional theories of counselling. Counsellors-in-training can benefit from clarifying their own theoretical approach to counselling and the strengths and weaknesses of the approach in regards to working with culturally diverse clients (D'Andrea & Daniels, 1997). Supervisors and counsellors-in-training can utilize Corey (1996a,b) to analyze the cultural implications of existing counselling theories. Through a thorough analysis of cultural implications of existing counselling theories, both the supervisor and counsellor-in-training can develop a more effective counselling approach for working with diverse clients.

Integrating multicultural counselling with counselling supervision models

Rather than developing an entirely different model of supervision to address cultural diversity, we recommend that cultural concepts be integrated into existing theories of counselling supervision. Indeed, integrating multicultural counselling strategies into existing counselling supervision models has theoretical advantages for counselling supervision. First, it would allow a framework for analyzing the culture-centered perspective (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993) of the many existing counselling supervision approaches. Second, the integrity of existing counselling supervision approaches can be maintained because cultural differences among the theories would be viewed as complementary explorations of different aspects of the human condition. A multicultural approach can be integrated into the existing models of counselling supervision, as described in the following paragraphs. Specifically, we will address the following approaches to counselling supervision: Psycho-

therapeutic model, behavioral model, Carkhuff (1969a; 1969b) counselling supervisory-training model, and psychobehavioral model.

Psychotherapeutic model

A multicultural approach can be woven into the psychotherapeutic approach. A pervasive theme in this approach is that in order to be an effective counselling supervisor, one must be cognizant of the context in which the counsellor-in-training lives and/or grew up in and the context in which counselling supervision is occurring. A counselling supervisor can integrate multicultural theory into the psychodynamic model by emphasizing that identities are formed and embedded in individual, group, and universal experiences and individual, family, and cultural contexts. The psychotherapeutic model can focus on how the interrelationships of experiences and contexts in the supervisor/counsellor-in-training relationship and the counsellor-in-training/client relationship impact on interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics.

The interpersonal dynamics that occur between the counsellor-in-training and client are a primary focus in psychotherapeutic counselling supervision. Communication travels by non-verbal as well as verbal interpersonal behavior. Yet counselling supervision cannot assume that universal communication exists across cultures. Indeed, a handshake or head nod in Western society may differ from a similar nod or shake in non-Western society. Counselling supervision should help the counsellor-in-training to be an effective interpersonal communicator across cultures. Within the counselling supervisory process, the counselling supervisor has the same responsibility toward the counsellor-in-training as the counsellor-in-training to the client in counselling. The counselling supervisor is responsible for dealing with received and sent interpersonal dynamics in such a manner that the counsellor-in-training learns how to interact effectively. If the counselling supervisor recognizes and responds effectively to cultural dynamics in the counselling supervisory relationship by utilizing both Euro-American and other cultural approaches, the counselling supervisor will be modeling effective interactions for the counsellor-in-training.

Behavioral model

The goal of behavioral counselling supervision is always the development of culturally effective skills. Each counsellor-in-training should be treated as an individual with needs that are particular to his or her context of relationships and cultural identities. Although behavioral counselling supervision does not focus on the counselling supervisory relationship as a primary

source of experiential learning or therapeutic growth, it nevertheless sees the relationship as a very important and instrumental part of the counselling supervisory process. In behavioral counselling supervision, a relationship must exist between the counselling supervisor and counsellor-in-training that is conducive to learning, otherwise counselling supervision is at a standstill. If a relationship is going to be conducive to learning it must acknowledge the cultural identities and context of both the counselling supervisor and the counsellor-in-training (Bradley, 1989).

After establishing a relationship with the counsellor-in-training, the counselling supervisor should analyze and assess the skills of the counsellor-in-training. Analysis and assessment of counsellor-in-training skills necessitate that the behavioral counselling supervisor have an extensive knowledge of how to match a repertoire of counselling skills with the right client at the right time (Sue et al., 1996). The behavioral counselling supervisor would be wise to construct a mental model of the ideal skill repertoire of a culturally competent counsellor-in-training. Sue et al. (1992) outline a description of a multiculturally competent counsellor which is an excellent framework for constructing a model of the ideal skill repertoire.

Analysis and assessment provides the information for the establishment of counselling supervision goals. Since counselling supervision goals must be acceptable to the counselling supervisor and counsellor-in-training, our premise is that the counselling supervisor be tolerant of the counsellor-in-training's goal preferences. Counsellors-in-training may set goals which reflect their culturally learned assumptions; therefore, the counsellors-in-training' goals may lead them in a different direction than the counselling supervisor's goals. Once goals have been established, strategies should be constructed and implemented to accomplish the goals. Counselling supervision strategies are the action plans that are made and implemented by the counsellor-in-training and counselling supervisor for the attainment of counselling supervision goals. In constructing the action plan, the counselling supervisor acknowledges that linear thinking may be appropriate for understanding some counsellors-in-training, while nonlinear thinking may be appropriate for others. The counsellor-in-training assists in constructing the strategy and receives only consultative assistance in carrying out this process.

The Carkhuff counselling supervisory-training model

The focus of Carkhuff's integrative approach to counselling supervisory training is the facilitative interpersonal dimensions of empathy and respect, the facilitative and action-oriented dimensions of concreteness, genuineness, and self-disclosure, and the action-oriented dimensions of immediacy and confrontation (Carkhuff, 1969a,b; Carkhuff & Truax, 1965; Truax, Carkhuff &

Dowds, 1964). Goals of the Carkhuff approach are: (a) to enable counsellors-in-training to offer effective levels of the facilitative and action-oriented conditions, and (b) to equip counsellors-in-training with the skills of assisting clients to construct and implement courses of action leading to constructive resolution of difficulties.

Two of the most important aspects of Carkhuff's counselling supervisory methodology are the counselling supervisor's level of therapeutic functioning and the integration of three learning modalities. If a counselling supervisor is going to offer psychologically facilitative conditions to the counsellor-in-training, the counselling supervisor must recognize the cultural identities of the counsellor-in-training and respond to these cultural identities in ways that facilitate an examination of cultural values and an affirmation of the cultural context of those values and identities. Throughout the Carkhuff model the counselling supervisor leads counsellors-in-training through a three-step program of integrative learning activities: discrimination training, communication training, and training in developing effective courses of action.

Psychobehavioral approach

The psychobehavioral approach (Woody, 1971) represents a conceptual rationale and a technical frame of reference for the integration of methodology from insight counselling and behavioral counselling. Psychobehavioral counselling supervision is personalistic. Just as flexibility and versatility are essential ingredients for an effective psychotherapist (Lazarus, 1971), these also are necessary attributes for the psychobehavioral counselling supervisor. The counselling supervisor must practice a technical eclecticism, employing an integrative methodology, as well as choosing and implementing singular techniques from the psychotherapeutic and behavioral approaches at certain times. The characteristics of the counsellor-in-training are a factor which should dictate methodology. The counsellor-in-training should be offered a form of counselling supervision which is uniquely tailored to the counsellor-in-training's characteristics. During the psychobehavioral counselling supervision process the counsellor-in-training's learning needs change, thus dictating alterations in counselling supervision methodology. Those counselling supervision techniques and strategies that are appropriate in helping beginners face their first few counselling sessions may not be appropriate during the final step of the counselling supervision process.

Psychobehavioral counselling supervision should facilitate and utilize the counsellor-in-training's self-development ability. The counselling supervisor is totally responsible for his or her performance, and is partially responsible for the counsellor-in-training's reaction. This partial respon-

sibility refers to the counselling supervisor's elicitation and reinforcement of counsellor-in-training self-development. Counselling supervision should maximally facilitate and utilize the responsible self-development.

Summary and recommendations

In summary, we have presented counselling supervision as a multifaceted process, whose major objective is to supervise or oversee the work of the counsellor-in-training in an effort to increase the counsellor-in-training's effectiveness. With a growing awareness of how cultural issues impact on the counselling relationship, the counselling supervision process must address cultural diversity rather than ignoring it. This paper has outlined a four-step model for developing culturally competent counselling supervisors. The four steps are: (a) developing cultural awareness of the counselling supervisor; (b) exploring the cultural dynamics of the counselling supervisory relationship; (c) examining the cultural assumptions of traditional counselling theories; and (d) integrating multicultural issues into existing models of counselling supervision.

Based on the literature reviewed in the article and the conceptualization of a model for culturally competent counselling supervision, the following recommendations are made. First, counselling supervision training in graduate programs must acknowledge how cultural influences impact counsellors-in-training and clients and incorporate cultural competencies into training counselling supervisors. Second, continuing education and in-service training for counselling supervisors in the field needs to emphasize the development of culturally competent counselling supervision. Third, research is needed to investigate how cultural awareness and skills impact the counselling supervision process. Research is also needed to substantiate the premises of this model for developing culturally competent counselling supervisors.

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