Review Article

Improving Counselor Supervision and Documentation Through the Integrated Supervision Casenote

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Documentation of supervision is ethically required, yet few models exist to guide the supervisor in this process. The Integrated Supervision Casenote (ISC) was introduced as a comprehensive casenote that encompasses aspects of psychotherapy, developmental, and process models through a case study to illustrate application of all three aspects.

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Supervision is of continued importance in the counseling profession as counselor educators are charged with educating and training new counselors in the field to ensure quality care for clientele^{[1][2]}. Core components of counselor development, especially in the early years of training, include improving their competency skills, theoretical development, and case conceptualization. Consequently, clinical supervision of counselors is considered one of the most critical aspects of training professional counselors^{[3][4]}. Clinical supervision is comprised of the development and implementation of learning plans individualized based on the needs of the supervisee; however, the process and procedure of supervision can be fluid. Consequently, supervision can be completed in various ways based on the supervisor's theoretical orientation^[2]. While best practice models have been suggested^[5] (Milne et al., 2008), little has been published regarding the processes, content, and outcome^[4].

Types of Supervision Models

There are three primary models of supervision related to counseling supervision in the literature; specifically, psychotherapy-based supervision models, developmental models of supervision, and supervision process models^{[3][6]}. Psychotherapy theory-based models are primarily centered on passing

on the supervisors' theory approach. Developmental models are centered on the learning process for the supervisee. Supervision process models primarily step back and observe the supervision process itself $^{[3]}$. However, due to the complexity of both psychotherapy and supervision, Bernard & Goodyear $^{[3]}$ suggest that no one model could succeed in addressing all the areas imperative to supervision. As the specialty of supervision has evolved and grown in importance, so have supervision models to attend to the various aspects of supervision and counselor development $^{[3]}$. However, little exists in the literature to offer a way to integrate the psychotherapy, developmental, and process models $^{[7][3][6]}$ to comprehensively meet the needs of the supervisee.

Though most supervisors identify more strongly with one category of supervision model than the others, supervision is likely influenced by all three categories. Specifically, Bernard & Goodyear^[3] posit that "supervisors do not practice within categories, but across categories" (p. 20); that is, many supervisors combine aspects of models from all three categories. Consequently, supervision is a complex process that requires not only specific skills, but also the ability to balance sometimes competing demands (e.g., protecting the client while also supporting supervisee development)^{[8][2]}. Integrating an approach to supervision that encompasses psychotherapy, developmental and process models offer comprehensive supervision that can lead to optimal counselor development. This article will demonstrate the combination of these models through a supervision casenote using the Person-Centered Psychotherapy model, Hogan's Developmental model, and the Discrimination process model, offering ways to enhance the supervisory process.

Unfortunately, many counselors assuming supervisory positions lack a clear guide or theoretical map to supervision despite research showing having a clear plan is essential to the supervisor's style; additionally, intentional, model-based interventions can significantly influence the supervisee's perceived self-efficacy and supervision satisfaction^[9]. Therefore, adhering to a supervision model(s) is imperative. Supervisors are charged with a challenging task; specifically, "competent supervisors not only are competent counselors; they are also skilled educators who convey their counseling knowledge and skills in ways that promote counselors' effectiveness and professional identity" ($^{[10]}$, p. 5).

Need for Documentation in Supervision

Borders & Brown^[11] stressed the importance of supervision as, "...a proactive, planned, purposeful, goal-oriented, and intentional activity" (p. 15). An essential common denominator in achieving this goal is

documentation. Though the importance of supervision documentation is stressed in the supervision literature [12][6], models for application are lacking. Intentional supervision includes following supervision models to guide the process just as counseling theories guide the therapy. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs [1] has standards specifically for supervision that must be addressed by accredited programs. The standards address various areas of the supervision process. These include some specific to models, culturally sustaining strategies, ethical and legal responsibilities and the purpose of supervision, theoretical framework, and models, understanding the roles and relationships and administrative procedures and responsibilities, such as documentation. Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Best Practices for Clinical Supervision [12] stress the importance of the casenotes providing, "a system of supervisor accountability", (p. 12) with the following guidelines:

- i. The supervisor maintains documentation that, at a minimum, includes the supervision contract (signed by supervisor, supervisee, and, as appropriate, the site supervisor or others involved in the supervisory experience), supervision session casenotes, and formative and summative evaluations of the supervisee.
- ii. The supervisor includes the sessions information in supervision session casenotes: supervisee and client informed consent, content of what was discussed (e.g., counseling session reviewed, client updates provided, site issues), review method used (e.g., recorded session, live observation), goals developed for counseling sessions, and recommendations and/or directives regarding counseling session and/or client care. As needed, the supervisor also includes decision processes, problems, and remediation efforts.
- iii. The supervisor does not include unprofessional remarks about the supervisee or client, sensitive supervisee personal history information, or unsupported opinions in his/her casenotes.
- iv. The supervisor documents supervision sessions so as to protect client welfare, record supervisee development, provide guidance for preparing for and managing future supervision sessions, and serve as a basis for accurate supervisee evaluations.
- v. The supervisor maintains documents related to supervision sessions so that they protect the privacy and confidentiality of the supervisee (e.g., in a locked file cabinet or on a secure server) and are separate from any client files.
- vi. The supervisor maintains documentation according to the policies of his/her employing institution, ethical codes, and other relevant guidelines (e.g., licensure regulations). When providing supervision

for certification or licensure, the supervisor maintains documentation until the supervisee submits such documentation for credentialing. (p. 12)

Within the counseling field it is well established that supervision casenotes should contain some basic information such as the time and date of supervision, the name of the supervisee, the feedback and interventions utilized or offered, and plans for the session including follow up for the future^[6]. Just as with therapy casenotes, completing them in a thorough and timely manner is crucial and offers opportunity to review the development and growth of the supervisee over the course of time, providing information for evaluations and feedback. Though the list of best practices does not specifically state that the supervision models utilized for supervision should be documented, doing so offers a guide to the supervision process and supervisee growth. Despite the emphasis on the ways to conduct effective clinical supervision and the need for documentation^{[6][12]} (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), few examples of supervision casenotes have been offered in the literature and none that specifically addressed all the suggested areas of process, psychotherapy, and development. While Fall & Sutton^[13] and Falvey, et al. ^[14] did offer examples of comprehensive supervision casenotes, they did not offer the combination of psychotherapy, developmental and process models as suggested by Bernard & Goodyear (2004) to holistically address supervision needs.

Another crucial component of effective supervision self-awareness and reflective knowledge [15][16][17]. These aspects are essential to applying professional judgement to intricate client scenarios and having the knowledge to adapt as needed to enhance the supervision process. Previous casenote examples have also not focused on the self-reflection component for the supervisor. These authors postulate that having a supervision casenote that adheres to specific supervision models is the most comprehensive way to address the best practice areas and it also provides a helpful tool in self-evaluation and reflection for the supervisor.

This article will offer the ISC developed by Massengale^[18] for supervision documentation that offers a combination of process, psychotherapy, and developmental aspects of the supervisee while simultaneously offering the supervisor a self-reflection tool for self-assessment. The models utilized in this example include the discrimination process model, Person-Centered psychotherapy model and Hogan's developmental model.

Integrated Supervision Casenote

The ISC organizes the process of psychotherapy, developmental and process models of supervision in a way that offers immediate feedback for both the supervisee's development and the role of the supervisor. The ISC is adaptable for various models. For this article, a case example will be provided demonstrating the use of the ISC using Hogan's developmental model, Person Centered psychotherapy model, and the Discrimination process model (Table 1). Chosen models for each area are illustrated through their defining concepts and stages. The developmental aspects are addressed first on the ISC by examining characteristics and needs of the supervisee. This allows the supervisor to prioritize the developmental needs of the supervisee as they begin to conceptualize the needs of the supervisee as well as ensuring proper expectations. For example, a supervisee in a beginning practicum class, will not have the same needs and developmental expectations as one who is in their final internship or in their first year of working toward licensure.

Table 1. Sample Casenote

Development	Level 1:	Level 2:	Level 3:	Level 4:
- Hogan	Dependence	Dependence/Autonomy	Conditional Dependence	Master
	□ Insecure	☐ Fluctuation	☐ Stable Motivation	□ Autonomy
Characteristics	□ Anxious	□ Motivation	□ Increases	□ Insight
	□ Unaware	□ Confidence	□ Confidence	□ Awareness
	☐ High Motivation	□ Overwhelmed	□ Awareness	□ Security
Needs	□ Teaching	□ Support	□ Peer-ship	□ Peer-ship
	\square Interpretation	□ Ambivalence	□ Sharing	□ Sharing
	□ interpretation	Clarification		
	□ Support	□ Exemplification	□ Exemplification	□ Confrontation
	☐ Exemplification	□ Teaching	☐ Confrontation	□ Consultation
	☐ Awareness Training			

Process: Discrimination Model	Focus	Role	Medium	Purpose	Notes
Primary	☐ Intervention ☐ Conceptualization ☐ Personalization ☐ Professional Issues	□ Teacher □ Counselor □ Consultant	☐ Verbal ☐ Expressive Arts ☐ Sand Tray ☐ Art Mediums ☐ Body Work	□ Video Review □ Theory □ Client Issues □ Site Issues □ Evaluation □ Ethics □ Documentation □ Diversity □ Skill Review □ R/L neuro □ Supervision □ Self-Care □ Termination □ Other □ Countertransference □ Personal Issues	
Secondary	☐ Intervention ☐ Conceptualization ☐ Personalization ☐ Professional Issues	□ Teacher □ Counselor □ Consultant	□ Verbal □ Expressive Arts □ Sand Tray □ Art Mediums □ Body Work	□ Video Review □ Theory □ Client Issues □ Site Issues □ Evaluation □ Ethics □ Documentation □ Diversity □ Skill Review □ R/L neuro □ Supervision □ Self-Care □ Termination □ Other □ Countertransference □ Personal Issues	

Working Alliance	Strength	+ Supervisee Characteristics	- Supervisee Characteristics	+ Supervisor Characteristics	- Supervisor Characteristics
Person Centered	□ Strong	□ Open	□ Guarded	□ Collaboration	□ Countertransference
	□ Moderate	□ Engaged	□ Unengaged	□ Challenge	□ Noncollaborative
	□ Weak	□ Vulnerable	□ Defensive	☐ Genuine Curiosity	□ Impatient
		□ Receptive	□ Resistant	☐ Perspective Taking	□ Lacking Empathy
Lens		□ Trust	□ Distrust	□ Empathy	☐ Lacking Acceptance
				□ Patience	□ Not Genuine
				□ Self-Disclosure	□ Insecure

Ethical Concerns	Multicultural / Diversity Concerns

The next area on the ISC is the process model. This type of model guides the supervision session and focuses on the process of supervision. The process model offers the roadmap for the session and is therefore addressed immediately after the developmental section. The example in this case utilized discrimination model and was broken into the primary and secondary foci. The foci are listed in each of the two sections according to the discrimination model (intervention, conceptualization, personalization, and professional issues). The supervisor would check the areas accordingly. For example, if the supervisee was struggling with how to complete casenotes, the professional issues box would be

checked. If this were the focus for the entire session, the box would be checked in both primary and secondary. However, if the supervisor also modeled a counseling intervention for working with clients, the intervention box would also be checked, highlighting both the primary and secondary focus according to the time utilized.

Across the top of this section the following are listed in addition to the foci, according to the Discrimination model (role, medium, purpose, and notes). The supervisor would check the primary and secondary role. In the previous example, they would have checked teacher role in both areas as casenotes and interventions fall under this area. Medium refers to whether the interventions were verbal only or through the use of expressive arts, etc. and can be adapted according to the supervisors preferred modalities and scope of practice. The purpose section describes the issues at hand or the reasons for the interventions such as documentation or client issues. The notes section offers space for the supervisor to document additional thoughts or reminders for follow-up.

Finally, the psychotherapy model utilized is addressed through the Working Alliance section. These models encompass the supervisors chosen counseling theory. This area is always present as it provides the framework for the supervisor's view of human nature and the needed change agents in the therapeutic process. Since supervisors were counselors first, it is natural that their theoretical lens that they used to understand their work with clients would naturally transfer to their work with supervisees. The ISC includes the strengths as well as positive and negative characteristics of both the supervisee and supervisor to define the working alliance in terms of things that are going well and areas for growth. This enables the supervisor to evaluate all aspects of the working alliance relationship and determine needed steps. The ISC has an added section at the end for noting ethical concerns as well as those related specifically to diversity and other culminating notes can also be added to this area if needed to serve as reminders for upcoming sessions. The ISC represents a pivotal tool in the realm of counselor education and supervision. The following case study explores its utility in a real-life academic supervision setting over an academic semester.

ICSN Case Example

The following is a hypothetical case example designed to illustrate the application of the ICSN. 'Holly' and 'Joaquin' are composite characters and do not represent real individuals.

Holly was a Ph.D. counseling student enrolled in a supervision course. She was supervising Joaquin, a master's level counseling student enrolled in their first semester of practicum. The models she identified

with were Hogan's developmental model, the Discrimination model, and her psychotherapy model was Person-Centered. Her professor suggested utilizing the ICSN to document her supervisees growth and needs and to also allow her to continue to grow within the language of her models.

During supervision sessions with masters counseling students, Holly noted on the ICSN, a tendency to predominantly adopt the role of teacher. The discrimination model advocates for fluid movement between its three foci areas and roles, but she predominantly remained in one. Through reflective 'supervision of supervision,' her supervisor noticed this tendency and explored this with Holly to assess whether the student was struggling to the point that this much teaching was needed or if it was Holly's need due to her own need. She became aware of her own feelings of comfort in a teaching role, having been an elementary teacher but also those of insecurity in her new role as supervisor. These feelings, she realized, made the 'teacher' role a safer, more comfortable choice, despite potentially not always being the most appropriate response to her supervisees' developmental needs. Recognizing that her comfort should not dictate the supervision approach, Holly sought a more supervisee-centered strategy.

Introductory Session: Establishing Foundation

The initial supervision session began with Holly leading introductions and an interactive discussion about the significance of confidentiality, the supervision contract, and the supervision process. The ISC was introduced to Joaquin and provided supervisor disclosure and an overview of counselor development. The teacher role was utilized to provide structure, instruction, and direct feedback. The heart of the session was a reflective conversation as Joaquin shared their journey and desire towards becoming a clinical mental health counselor, expressing both excitement for the opportunity and a natural apprehension about facing real clients for the first time. Holly utilized the counselor role to enhance Joaquin's reflectivity and process feelings of anxiety. Holly's response was a blend of supportive acknowledgment and professional guidance. This balance was crucial in addressing Joaquin's needs at this early developmental stage (Level 1 – Dependence) in their training, specifically teaching and support. In reflection, this first session set a solid groundwork for their supervisory relationship. Holly's approach laid the foundation for a supervisory alliance that was nurturing and collaborative. The environment she created was conducive to open dialogue. This fostered an engaged and receptive dynamic between supervisor and supervisee.

Beginning Sessions: Deepening Understanding and Addressing Challenges

Focusing on Joaquin's developmental level (Level 1 - Dependence) and associated needs of exemplification, support, and awareness training, Holly utilized the role of teacher as they discussed focus areas such as role-playing informed consent (intervention), exploration of counseling theories and Joaquin's alignment (case conceptualization), and their anxiety regarding working with clients (personalization). An important aspect of these sessions involved Holly broaching diversity conversations with Joaquin (exemplification) and consequently delving into Joaquin's intersectionality of identities, understanding how these facets play a crucial role in counseling dynamics. Holly guided Joaquin in how to broach conversations of diversity with clients, emphasizing the significance of being sensitive to and acknowledging clients' diverse backgrounds and experiences as well as Joaquin's hesitation to engage in these conversations with clients (intervention, personalization, awareness training, support). They practiced and role-played these conversations, equipping Joaquin with the skills to broach such discussions sensitively and effectively (intervention, teaching, exemplification). Utilizing counselor role, Holly created a safe space for Joaquin to express and process fears related to not being perfect, potentially harming clients, and their imposter syndrome (personalization) in effort to help Joaquin gain awareness. This aspect of supervision highlighted Holly's developing skill in blending the roles of teacher and counselor to meet Joaquin's developmental level. While she imparted knowledge and structure as a teacher, her counselor role allowed her to offer empathy, validation, and emotional support while helping Joaquin reflect and process these challenging feelings that could impact their work with clients. Throughout these sessions, Holly's approach continued to lay a solid foundation for a strong supervisory alliance. The environment she fostered encouraged open dialogue and mutual trust, which was vital for Joaquin's professional and personal growth. Their dynamic remained engaged and receptive, with each session contributing significantly to Joaquin's developmental journey and readiness to face the challenges of the counseling practicum.

Middle Sessions: Progression and Deepening of Practice

As Joaquin progressed through their practicum, their developmental journey continued to evolve, remaining at Level 1-Dependence but showing signs of growing confidence and capability. The middle sessions with Holly marked a significant phase where Joaquin began seeing clients independently, experiencing a shift from heightened anxiety to increased excitement and engagement. Joaquin's ability to build relationships with clients was evident, yet they encountered a common challenge faced by many

in the early stages of counseling: feeling stuck after initial client sessions. Holly's role as a teacher became pivotal in navigating this phase. She worked closely with Joaquin to delve deeper into counseling theories, providing a framework that would guide their practice with clients (conceptualization, teaching). This exploration was more than academic; it was a journey into understanding Joaquin's beliefs about healing, change, and client growth. Holly emphasized the importance of intentional practice aligned with the counseling process's goals. One of the standout aspects of these sessions was Joaquin's increasing vulnerability. They were more open to discussing both successes and struggles, reflecting a strong supervisory alliance characterized by trust and mutual respect. Holly's supportive and empathetic approach enabled Joaquin to engage more fully in the supervision process. A key component of these sessions was the review of recorded client interactions. Together, Holly and Joaquin analyzed specific skills and interventions used in sessions (intervention, exemplification), with a focus on Joaquin's intentionality and the overarching case conceptualization for each client (conceptualization, awareness training). This exercise was instrumental in enhancing Joaquin's understanding of practical application and theory integration. As these sessions progressed, Joaquin's confidence as a practicum student visibly grew. The supportive and instructive environment created by Holly played a crucial role in this development. Their supervisory relationship, marked by strong alliance and effective communication, was a foundation that enabled Joaquin to navigate the complexities of early-stage counseling with increasing confidence and skill. The ISCN's structured approach was pivotal in guiding Holly's supervisor roles, enabling her to provide a tailored framework for Joaquin's practice with clients and to effectively review and analyze recorded client interactions for enhanced practical application and theory integration.

Final Supervision Sessions: Transitioning to Conditional Dependence

As Joaquin neared the end of their practicum semester, Holly observed a significant transition in their developmental journey. Joaquin was starting to shift from Level 1 (Dependence) to Level 2 (Conditional Dependence). This transition was marked by Joaquin's evolving approach to supervision – moving from seeking direct answers from Holly to grappling with the inherent ambiguities of the counseling process. During this phase, Joaquin experienced the characteristic fluctuations of Level 2, oscillating between feelings of competence and self-doubt. Some days they felt like an accomplished counselor; while on others, they doubted their ability to effectively support clients. Holly recognized these as natural parts of the developmental process and utilized her role as a teacher to educate Joaquin about these developmental stages, reassuring them that their experiences were normal and indicative of their

progression to Level 2 (personalization, teaching). Holly's utilization counseling role was also pivotal in providing support and validation as Joaquin navigated these fluctuating emotions. She helped Joaquin to reflect on and process these feelings, offering a stable and understanding presence amidst their rapidly changing self-perceptions (personalization, support, ambivalence clarification). A key moment in these sessions was Joaquin's encounter with their first ethical dilemma. Holly initially adopted the teacher role to guide Joaquin through the ACA's ethical decision-making model (teaching, exemplification). However, to align with Joaquin's budding Level 2 status, Holly transitioned to a consultant role. This shift encouraged Joaquin to apply the model semi-independently to their client situation, fostering independent thinking and decision-making within the safety net of supervision. In the role of consultant, Holly's approach was focused on helping Joaquin trust their instincts and insights, building confidence in their knowledge and abilities as an ethical, competent counselor in training. This approach was instrumental in reinforcing Joaquin's self-efficacy and autonomy, crucial for their development as a counseling professional. The final sessions marked a period of significant growth for Joaquin, characterized by increased self-awareness, the development of independent decision-making skills, and the ability to navigate complex emotional and ethical landscapes. Holly's adaptive supervisory style shifting between teaching, counseling, and consulting roles, was central to facilitating this progression, and laying a strong foundation for Joaquin's continued growth beyond their practicum experience.

Implications for Future Practice

Currently, recommendations for supervision involve choosing models from all three supervision categories: specifically, psychotherapy theory-based, developmental, and process models. However, this recommendation can be challenging for supervisors to utilize successfully, especially with very few examples provided in the literature. This example included the integration of Bernard's^[19] discrimination model and Hogan's^[20] four-level model provides supervisors multidimensional perspectives to work with counseling supervisees. This comprehensive casenote incorporates all the categories to bridge the gap in current literature regarding implementing developmental aspects into the use of both a process and psychotherapy model for supervision. The ISCN provides a guide to the developmental needs of supervisees while also providing a comprehensive approach to addressing the process and psychotherapy needs, and offering a framework in which models may be interchangeable. For example, the same format may be utilized exchanging the Person–Centered Psychotherapy model with the concepts from Cognitive Behavioral or the Reflective Learning process model^[21]; concepts may be incorporated rather than

Discrimination. Likewise, since the Integrated Development Model [222] is a popular developmental model, the stages can be input into this format rather than using Hogan's to offer a comprehensive approach to the supervisory process. Future research should include the use of the casenote to assess the supervisory working alliance, supervisee development, and supervision process. See Table 1. Qualitative research investigating the working alliance from both supervisor and supervisee perspective would add to the literature as it offers an intentional approach. The casenote also serves as a self-assessment for the supervisor. For example, if upon the review of the notes, the supervisor finds that they have spent a great deal of time in counselor role from the Discrimination model perspective, they should reflect on why they spent so much time in this role. Is the supervisee in need of a counseling referral for more in-depth processing and self-awareness? For example, is the supervisor most comfortable in this role and thus focusing the supervision session accordingly? Qualitative inquiries into the self-awareness of the supervisor would also add to existing literature.

Conclusion

To offer a holistic approach to supervision, it is important that models from all three areas of psychotherapy, developmental., and process are implemented. This facilitates= practice across categories rather than within. This article addressed this need by incorporating the Person-Centered, Discrimination, and Hogan's Developmental models as examples in a comprehensive supervision casenote to demonstrate the application and usefulness of this approach. Ways to address the self-awareness of the supervisor were also demonstrated through the ISCN.

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Conflicts of Interest

No potential competing interests to declare.

Ethics

Ethical review and approval were not required for this educational case study in accordance with local legislation and institutional requirements as it was not a research study. Written informed consent was not required as no real participants were evaluated or represented.

Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new datasets were generated or analyzed in this study.

Author Contributions

B.H.: Conceptualization, Writing—original draft; K.L.P. Writing—review & editing; J.M.: Supervision, Writing—review & editing. All authors have read and agreed to the final version of the manuscript.

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